

August 9, 2008

Newcomers shine in first scrimmage

Tanner rushes for 70 yards and a TD

Athletic Communications

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee went through its first full-scale scrimmage of fall camp as the Blue Raiders went 112 plays on a beautiful afternoon in Floyd Stadium. The offense, defense, and special team all had plenty of highlights but it was a couple of injuries that put a damper on the day.

- **Photos:** [Fall Camp Photo Gallery](#)

An offensive line that has just 11 available scholarship players saw their starting center leave the scrimmage at the midway point with a knee injury. Redshirt freshman [Jake Padrick](#) will have an MRI and results should be known by early next week. Also, true freshman lineman [Alex Stuart](#) went down after he reagravated an old injury and his status is day-to-day.



Freshman Tony Smith (22) breaks free from a defensive player during his 15-yard run. ()

"They took Jake to the training room and I asked how it looked. They said it didn't look too good so I will not know anything until he is thoroughly checked out by our doctors," said Head Coach Rick Stockstill. Right now we will have to go with freshman [Travis Lillienthal](#) at center if Jake can not come back."

As for the first scrimmage, Stockstill saw plenty to make him crack a smile but also a few things he still has to get ironed out before the season opener on August 28.

Offensively, quarterbacks [Joe Craddock](#) and [Dwight Dasher](#) were virtually even while [Phillip Tanner](#) led the way on the ground and a pair of newcomers in [Eldred King](#) and [Malcolm Beyah](#) paced a much deeper receiving corps.

"We had to cut the scrimmage a little bit short because you just get scared of having more injuries," added Stockstill. "We wanted to run a few more drives to give our younger quarterbacks some experience but it did not work out. It's just frustrating.

"I thought [Phillip Tanner](#) had some nice runs and [Malcolm Beyah](#) and Mike Cannon did some good things for us as well. [D.D. Kyles](#) and [Chris McClover](#) also had a couple of good plays but we are still in the mode of having to tell them everything to do right now so they have a lot more learning to do."

Craddock completed 13 of 20 passes for 110 yards, a touchdown and one interception while Dasher went 10 for 21 for 109 yards and one interception. The lone touchdown pass came on the eighth possession of the scrimmage when Craddock found tight end [Gene Delle Donne](#) over the middle for 20 yards.

"I thought both guys made some nice throws and some pretty good runs," said Stockstill. "To me I thought they were about even. Neither one looked like they were head and shoulders above the other one."

Tanner easily led all rushers with 70 yards on 14 carries and a touchdown, including a nice 39-yard run that set up his lone score. It was all freshmen after that as [Tony Smith](#) had 39 yards on seven attempts, followed by Beyah's 37 yards on a reverse, and 22 yards each by [Jawan Carson](#) and [D.D. Kyles](#).

King and Beyah led all receivers with four receptions while [Patrick Honeycutt](#) and Cannon added three each. Delle Donne and McClover both had two catches.

"Beyah did not look like a freshman out there," added Stockstill. "He really did well. He had the one drop and it showed at times that he was not in game-shape, but he made some nice plays today. He has proven he has what it takes to help us out this year."

Defensively, Manny Diaz' bunch dominated the scrimmage early by keeping the offense out of the endzone eight straight possessions. In fact, the play of the day came on the first possession. Craddock tried to float a pass over the top to Delle Donne but a streaking [Chris McCoy](#) leaped high and pulled it down from his defensive end position.

McCoy, a junior, enjoyed a solid day with three tackles, one tackle for loss, an interception, and a pass breakup. Newcomer [Jamari Lattimore](#) led all players with six tackles, while [Jeremy Kellem](#), [Rod Issac](#), [Josh Gregory](#), Jonathan Presley, and [Emmanuel Perez](#) all had four stops each. Freshman [Hakeem Johnson](#) recorded the other interception when he picked off Dasher near the goal line.

Overall, the defense came up with four sacks, nine tackles for loss, two interceptions, five pass breakups, and a blocked field goal.

A huge bright spot for the Blue Raiders came on special teams with the play of freshman kicker [Alan Gendreau](#). The Maitland, Fla., product connected on 5 of 6 field goals with his lone miss coming on a block that Stockstill said was the fault of a missed assignment by a lineman. Gendreau was successful on kicks of 21, 25, 40, 40, and 45 yards and every kick had room to spare.

"I was very, very pleased with [Alan Gendreau](#) today," said Stockstill. "I thought he kicked extremely well and made all of his kicks. The block was not his fault; we had a lineman up front that came through the gap clean. In my eyes he set the bar today. We will keep working the competition but to me he did everything we wanted him to do. It might be for the best now because [David DeFatta](#) can focus on his punting and [Matt King](#) can focus on kickoffs."

The Blue Raiders will return to the practice field on Sunday at 5:10 PM.

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