

August 20, 2008

Blue Raiders have focused, productive practice

Stockstill happy with players approach

Athletic Communications

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - An enormous roar reverberated throughout the practice field moments after the Blue Raiders had completed their 22nd practice of fall camp and were addressed by head coach Rick Stockstill.

Cause of the uproar?

"I guess they liked what I had to say," Stockstill said.

What Stockstill said was simple but meaningful as Middle Tennessee heads into the thick of game week preparations for the 2008 season opener against Troy, Aug. 28, at Floyd Stadium.

The Blue Raiders practiced in shorts and helmets in pleasant late afternoon weather yet it was a sharp, focused session in which Stockstill believes his team took another step forward in what has been a productive preseason camp to this point.

"I just told them we had a good practice, we were sharp and focused and got out of it what we needed to," Stockstill said. "Our focus today was to not take the practice off mentally because we were in shorts, and they didn't. Our focus was good and we were into it. I thought we had a good practice."

Another reason for optimism could also be what the veteran coach calls the "excitement phase" of camp. After two-plus weeks of preseason practice players realize the opener is right in front of them as preparations for Troy continue.

"You go through some different phases of camp," Stockstill said. "During the first week of camp everybody is excited because it is new. The second week is kind of like drudgery because you are hitting the same people and going through the same routine. The third week you are closer to game week and they start to get excited. We are in that excitement phase where you can see the season getting closer each day. I feel good about the team."

WILDCARD WEEKNIGHT: Middle Tennessee is offering a special ticket package for the two weeknight home football games against Troy (Aug. 28) and Florida Atlantic (Sept. 30). The package costs \$30 and includes a reserved seat for both games and a coupon for a hot dog and soft drink for each game. To order tickets, contact the MTSU Ticket Office at (615) 898-2103.

LAST CALL: Tickets to Middle Tennessee's non-conference road games at Louisville, Kentucky and Mississippi State will be returned to the home schools in the near future. Any Blue Raider fans wanting to sit in the Middle Tennessee section at these road games must purchase their tickets through the Blue Raider Ticket Office. For tickets, call 1-888-YES-MTSU or access GoBlueRaiders.com site.

BRAA BUS TRIPS: The Blue Raider Athletic Association (BRAA) will be sponsoring bus trips to football games against Kentucky, Louisville, Mississippi State, and Western Kentucky this season. Following are the costs for each trip: \$60 plus ticket for Kentucky; \$50 plus ticket for Louisville; \$80 plus ticket for Mississippi State; and \$35 plus ticket for WKU. For more details contact the BRAA office at 615-898-2210.



Head Coach Rick Stockstill and the Blue Raiders are just a week away from the season opener. ()

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