

# Blue Raiders celebrate riveting win against Maryland

## Middle Tennessee captures 24-14 win vs. Terps

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### **MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -**

Hundreds of fans, mostly students, poured onto the field to celebrate the highest-profile home win in school history with the Blue Raiders' players after Middle Tennessee secured a dominating 24-14 win against ACC-member Maryland in front of 22,605 at Floyd Stadium.

It was a well-deserved win for the players - and the fans.

"It was a great win for our players, our school, and our fans, just everybody involved," Blue Raider third-year coach Rick Stockstill said. "I'm happy for our players that they could feel the excitement of the fans running on the field to celebrate with them. I'm proud of the coaching staff because we were good in all three phases of the game. To beat a good Maryland team I thought we were the team that played with the greatest passion and toughness. It was an awesome win.



"We talked all week that it was not about Maryland. It was about us. We had to play with conviction, heart and passion and have a love for the game, and we did that."

There was a lot of love to go around after the Blue Raiders (1-1) piled up 402 yards on offense, dominated on defense, and came up with big plays on special teams. Quarterback Joe Craddock completed a career-best 28 passes (on 40 attempts) for 256 yards and two touchdowns, including a 53-yarder to key the Middle Tennessee attack.

"It was an awesome feeling knowing the seconds were ticking off and we were going to get the win," Craddock said. "What a great win for us, our fans, our University. This is why you do all the work and I'm glad it was at home and everybody got to enjoy it with us. These fans have stuck with us. We can't thank them enough. They were a big part of this tonight."

The crowd, 22,605 strong, was the sixth-largest in Floyd Stadium history and they were delighted by a defense that dominated the Terps (1-1). Maryland picked up 357 yards but 143 of those came on two plays. Otherwise, the Big Blue Stop Squad was solid. They picked off three passes, all in the second half, with Danny Carmichael, Ted Riley and Alex Suber all coming up with key picks.

The stop squad harassed quarterback Chris Turner from the outset and they limited the Terps' ground game to 146 yards and Maryland's offense was expected to be a strength behind its massive offensive line.

Didn't happen on this night as Maryland was held to three consecutive three-and-outs after a long touchdown run in the first half. The Blue Raiders also proved to be the better conditioned team in the second half when they started to dominate the line of scrimmage.

"We had to go out there, play team defense, give it all we had and not play scared," Carmichael said. "We got after them and it showed on the scoreboard. The three interceptions are just examples of how well our defense played. We capitalized on their mistakes."

And there was also the special teams unit, which was critical in the team's success. Punter-turned-quarterback David DeFatta completed a 28-yard pass to tight end Alvin Ingle on a fake punt on fourth-and-5 at the 44 on the Blue Raiders' opening drive. The play went for 28 yards to the Maryland 16 and four plays later Craddock connected with freshman Sancho McDonald for a 5-yard scoring pass to stake the Blue Raiders to a 7-0 lead after Alan Gendreau's extra point.

"We worked on the fake punt all week and I told (safeties coach) David Bibee, who put it in, that I was going to run it early in the game," Stockstill said. "We had to do it against their punt safe and they were in their punt safe because we were over the 50 so it was good for us. We executed it well and it gave us a shot in the arm. David DeFatta and Alvin Ingle executed it well."

It was one of several big special teams plays. Gendreau, who missed a 48-yard field goal in the first quarter, came back with a 31-yarder in the second to give Middle Tennessee a 10-7 lead at the half. DeFatta also averaged 42 yards on four punts and had one inside the 20.

Middle Tennessee went ahead 7-0 on Craddock's 5-yard pass to McDonald with 9:04 remaining in the first quarter, but Maryland came right back and, two plays later, scored on Da'Rel Scott's 63-yard run to even the score 7-7.

Gendreau's 31-yard field goal with 6:24 remaining in the half provided Middle Tennessee a 10-7 lead it would not relinquish. Clinging to the same lead in the third quarter, Carmichael cut in front of a pass and picked it off and returned it 25 yards to the 10 to thwart a Maryland drive and give the Blue Raider offense great position at the 10.

Three plays later, Phillip Tanner plunged in from the 1 to give the Blue Raiders a 17-7 lead with 1:06 remaining. Maryland cut the lead to 17-14 with 2:15 remaining late in the third quarter, but Middle

Tennessee wouldn't be denied on this night.

On the ensuing drive, Craddock connected with Malcolm Beyah for a 53-yard touchdown pass with 1:53 remaining in the third to extend the lead to 24-14. Riley's great pick in the end zone thwarted a rally early in the fourth quarter and Suber's acrobatic grab in the corner of the end zone late in the fourth sealed it.

Ivon Hickman led the team with six tackles, a sack and a tackle for loss. The Blue Raiders will be at Kentucky Saturday.

## **POSTGAME QUOTES**

### **HEAD COACH RICK STOCKSTILL**

#### **Opening comments:**

"It was a great win for our players, our school, and our fans, everybody involved. I thought it was an awesome win. I'm happy for our players that they could feel the excitement of the fans running on the field to celebrate with them. I'm proud of the coaching staff because we were good in all three phases. To beat a good Maryland team I thought we were the team that played with the greatest passion and toughness. It was an awesome win." "We talked all week that it was not about Maryland, it was about us. We had to play with conviction, heart and passion and have a love for the game and we did that. At the half we talked about not letting up, keeping the pressure on and finishing the game. We did that in the second half."

#### **On the offense:**

"I thought we did a nice job offensively. They were so much bigger than us and we knew it would be tough to run the ball but we had to do something to establish the run and Phillip Tanner helped us do that. We had to keep them honest and we did that. Joe Craddock did a nice job executing and running our offense tonight."

#### **On the fake punt:**

"We worked on it all week and I told (safeties coach) David Bibee, who put it in, that I was going to run it early in the game. We had to do it against their punt safe and they were in their punt safe so it was good for us. We executed it well and it gave us a shot in the arm. David DeFatta and Alvin Ingle executed it well."

#### **On the defense and the three INTs:**

"I thought our defense did a great job. Our front got pressure. You can't get interceptions unless you get pressure on the quarterback so it was a team defensive effort. Those were some big interceptions and they keyed the win."

#### **LB Danny Carmichael On the win:**

"We haven't had a big win in a long time and we had not win since beating Louisiana-Monroe last year so it feels great to get this feeling back."

#### **What was the plan against their big offensive line?**

"We had to go out there, play team defense, give it all we had and not play scared. We got after them and it showed on the scoreboard."

#### **Talk about the three interceptions in the second half.**

"Those are just examples of how well our defense played. Our defensive front and linebackers were

able to get some pressure on the quarterback and he made some throws he should not have made. We capitalized on their mistakes."

**The defense gave up 357 yards but 143 came on two plays. Talk about the defensive effort:**

"We gave up some big plays but we kept our composure and we kept fighting. We were not going to let those two big plays affect us. We kept fighting and found a way to win."

**On the fans:**

"Great feeling to have everybody out there with us. We showed our fans what we are made of and we appreciate their support. We are going to get them more wins."

**QB Joe Craddock**

**Thoughts on the win:**

"It's was an awesome feeling knowing the seconds were ticking off and we were going to get this win. What a great win for us, our fans, our University. This is why you do all the work and I'm glad it was at home and everybody got to enjoy it with us."

**On the play of the receivers:**

"These receivers are going to be great. They have a lot of talent and they just need more time in the system and they are going to be really fun to watch. They make plays."

**On Maryland's defense:**

"We knew going in Maryland wouldn't give us a big pass rush because they are more of a read team. We knew we would have some time and we just needed to execute."

**On the fans:**

"These fans stuck with us. We can't thank them enough. They were a big part of this tonight. I can't tell you how much we appreciate this crowd and how they believed in us. We have been so close so many times and had one heartbreaker after another but tonight we stuck with and found a big win."

**POSTGAME NOTES**

Middle Tennessee won its first-ever home game against a team from a BCS conference with the win over Maryland. It was the Blue Raiders' fourth win over a BCS team in 30 tries since joining the FBS ranks in 1999. It was also the Blue Raiders' first-ever win over an ACC team after entering the game 0-6 and the first win by the SBC over the ACC all-time.

**CRADDOCK HAS BIG NIGHT:** Senior Joe Craddock set career highs against Maryland in completions and attempts. Craddock completed 28 passes to better his previous mark of 22 set against Louisiana-Monroe in 2007 and also attempted a personal-best 40 passes. It marks the second straight game Craddock has completed at least 20 passes following the 20 he had against Troy in the season opener. On the night, Craddock hit eight different receivers on his way to a 256-yard performance. It marked the 10th 200-yard game under Rick Stockstill and four have been by Craddock.

**CAREER NIGHT FOR CALDWELL:** Sophomore wide receiver Wes Caldwell recorded a personal-best in receptions for the second week in a row. The Lexington, Ky., native hauled in six receptions for 32 yards against the Terps, which bettered his previous high of four grabs set last week against Troy.

**BEYAH STRIKES AGAIN:** True freshman wide receiver Malcolm Beyah reached the endzone for the second straight game when he reeled in a 53-yard pass from Joe Craddock in the third quarter to

give the Blue Raiders a 10-point lead. The Covington, Ga., product finished with a career-high four receptions for 94 yards and has now had scoring strikes in his brief career of 46 yards and 53 yards.

**DEFATTA SHINES ON KEY PLAY:** Junior punter David DeFatta picked the right time to connect on his first career pass completion and the first by a punter for MT in the FBS era. On Middle Tennessee's opening drive, DeFatta faked a punt and threw to a wide-open Alvin Ingle for 28 yards to keep the Blue Raider drive alive. It was Ingle's longest reception of his career and set up Sancho McDonald's three-yard touchdown reception. It marked the first attempted pass and completion by a punter under Rick Stockstill. In fact, the last time a punter attempted a pass was Aug. 28, 2003, against Florida Atlantic and Colby Smith's attempt was incomplete.

**CARMICHAEL GETS FIRST PICK:** Linebacker Danny Carmichael came up with his first career interception and it could not have come at a better time. Carmichael stepped in front of a Josh Turner pass at the Maryland 30-yard line and returned it to the 5-yard line to setup a Blue Raider touchdown run by Phillip Tanner.

**TOP TEN AGAIN:** The announced crowd against Maryland of 22,605 was the sixth largest in school history and marked the second straight Top 10 crowd for the Blue Raiders. Five of the Top 11 crowds at Floyd Stadium have come under Rick Stockstill.

**SUBER COMES UP BIG:** Junior Alex Suber came up with the biggest play of his career late in the fourth quarter when he intercepted a pass in the endzone to thwart a Maryland drive that would have brought the Terps to within three points. The interception was just the second of his career.

**QUICK HITTERS:** Alvin Ingle's 28-yard reception from punter David DeFatta was the longest of his career ... Chris McClover made his first career reception against the Terps ... DT Trevor Jenkins made his team-best 27th straight start ... WR Eldred King made his first career start against Maryland and DE Emmanuel Perez made his first career start as well ... Jamari Lattimore recorded his first career sack late in the second quarter ... LB Lonnie Clemons registered his first sack of the season when he collected one in the third quarter ... CB Ted Riley thwarted a Maryland drive with his first career interception early in the fourth quarter.

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