

Blue Raiders Rush to Victory over Idaho, 34-14

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -- Middle Tennessee rushed for a season-high 165 yards and three touchdowns, including scores on the ground from Lee Baker, Clint Marks and Terry Jackson, to post a 34-14 victory over Idaho Saturday at Floyd Stadium.

The victory is the second straight for the Blue Raiders over Idaho (2-6, 1-3 SBC) and third in the four-game series in the Sun Belt. Jackson rushed for a season-high 77 yards on nine carries, including a team season-long 52-yard scamper early in the second half.

Idaho played very well in the first half and twice took the lead, scoring on the first possession of the game on a 20-yard TD pass from Michael Harrington to Luke Smith-Anderson.

The Blue Raiders (3-4, 2-2) answered on a one-yard run from Baker, his third rushing score of the season. But the Vandals came right back on a five-yard run from Jayson Bird.

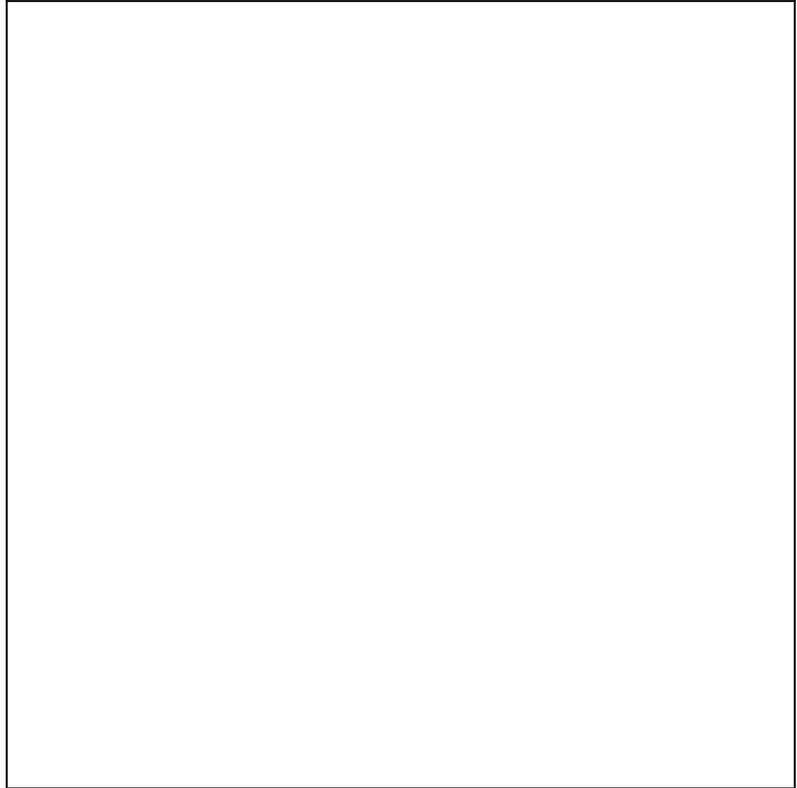
Middle Tennessee scored with 58 second remaining in the half on a five-yard run from Marks, then recovered the ensuing kickoff. Colby Smith gave the Blue Raiders a 17-14 lead at the half with a 29-yard field goal just before the half.

Jackson's one-yard run early in the second half put Middle Tennessee ahead, 24-14, before a Marks-to-Pedro Holiday 14-yard TD pass just before the end of the third period. Smith added a career-long 42-yard field goal midway through the final period for the 34-14 final score.

Marks was 18-of-26 for 194 yards and one touchdown passing in the contest and also ran for 43 yards on 10 attempts. Chris Henry led the Blue Raiders with five catches for 69 yards, while senior Kerry Wright had four receptions for 54 yards.

Middle Tennessee hosts Utah State at 2:05 p.m. CT next Saturday.

MARKS MOVES UP SEASON LIST: QB Clint Marks moved up the single-season list in passing yardage and completions today against Idaho. With 18 completions, Marks ran his season total to



180 and surpassed Jonathan Quinn for third place. Marks also tallied 194 yards through the air and now has 1936 passing yards on the season to rank fifth. The lefty passed Phil Ironside today for fifth place.

WRIGHT MOVES UP: Middle Tennessee senior wide receiver Kerry Wright had a four catches for 54 yards in the contest, moving into ninth place on the single-season receiving yards list. Wright passed Tyrone Calico and Cory Simpson. The East Point, Ga., native has 54 receptions for 719 yards and six touchdowns this season.

CAREER DAY FOR TJ: Redshirt freshman Terry Jackson paced a strong Middle Tennessee running attack by gaining a career-best 77 yards on nine carries. Jackson, who's previous best was a 49-yard game against Florida Atlantic, reeled off a 52-yard run in the third quarter that eventually led to his one-yard TD run. As a team, the Blue Raiders rushed for a season-best 165 yards on 39 attempts. It went down as the best rushing game by MT since it gained 195 yards in 2003 against Troy State.

HOLIDAY ON BOARD: Senior Pedro Holiday, who missed two games with an injury earlier this year, hauled in his first touchdown catch of the year when he collected one in the third quarter against Idaho. It went down as the third touchdown grab of his career.

PERSONAL-BEST FOR MARKS: QB Clint Marks has spent most of the year setting personal-highs in passing, but against Idaho he was getting it done on the ground. The sophomore rushed 10 times for a career-best 43 yards. It was the most rushing yards by a quarterback at Middle Tennessee since Andrico Hines rang up 90 yards at home against Troy State last year.

SMITH STEADY AGAIN: Sophomore placekicker Colby Smith continued his stellar season on Saturday by connecting on both his field goals. Smith hit a 27-yarder in the first half, then nailed a career-long 42-yarder in the fourth quarter. The Franklin, Tenn., native is now 10-for-11 in the field goal department on the season, has hit seven in a row and is a perfect 5-for-5 at home this year. Smith's seven straight made field goals ranks tied for the second longest mark in school history. He needs to make his next attempt to tie Brian Kelly's school mark of eight.

MT HAS SERIES CONNECTION: Middle Tennessee football manager Jeremy Meriwether will have a vested interest in this year's World Series between Boston and St. Louis. Meriwether's father, Chuck, will be one of the umpires when the series gets underway tonight at Fenway Park.

TIDBITS: Redshirt freshman Erik Walden made his first collegiate start today when he got the nod at defensive right end ... RB Lee Baker recorded his third career touchdown when he scored the Blue Raiders' first points in the second quarter ... WR Kerry Wright has now caught at least two passes in 19 straight games ... QB Clint Marks' second quarter touchdown run was the second of his career ... Terry Jackson's third quarter 52-yard run was the longest of his career and the longest of the season by the Blue Raiders ... Clint Marks made his first collegiate reception when he caught a nine-yard pass from wide receiver Pedro Holiday ... QB Clint Marks failed to throw for 200 yards for the first time this season ... The Blue Raiders tied a season-high with three rushing touchdowns in the contests. MT also ran for three scores in the season-opener at Akron ... The Blue Raiders completed 19 passes as a team in the contest, taking over fifth-place on the single-season list with 192 completions this season.

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