

October 30, 2004

Raiders Record First Shutout Since 2000, 21-0

MT Media Relations

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -- Middle Tennessee's **Kerry Wright** caught two touchdown passes and the Blue Raider defense limited visiting Utah State to 156 yards of total offense in a 21-0 shutout Saturday at Floyd Stadium.

The Blue Raiders recorded their first-ever shutout in Sun Belt play, a span of 24 games, and the first since October 14, 2000, versus Louisiana-Monroe. The defense also recorded a season-high seven sacks, with **Antoine Owens** and **Erik Walden** each collecting two.

Wright had another stellar day, catching nine passes for 167 yards and the two scores, including a 58-yard scoring play. Quarterback **Clint Marks** was 22-for-32 for 317 yards and two TD's in the win.

Middle Tennessee hits the road next week, facing New Mexico State before returning home November 13 to face Louisiana-Monroe.

BACK TO .500: With today's win over Utah State, the Blue Raiders moved their record to 4-4 this season. It marks the latest in a season that Middle Tennessee has been .500 or better since the 2001 campaign when the Blue Raiders were 6-2 after eight contests.

SHUTOUT: Middle Tennessee recorded a shutout today for the first time since blanking Louisiana-Monroe 28-0 at home on October 14, 2000 - a span of 48 games. It is the first shutout in Sun Belt play for the Blue Raiders in 24 contests. The last time Utah State was shutout came on October 16, 1999 with a 40-0 loss to 19th-ranked Kansas State. The last shutout in conference play for USU came October 16, 1986, at Cal State-Fullerton.

BLUE RAIDERS ON HOMECOMING: Middle Tennessee ran its record to 45-18-2 all-time on Homecoming with today's victory over Utah State. The Blue Raiders have now won 16 of their last 17 Homecoming games and are 5-1 under Andy McCollum.

SACK PARTY: Middle Tennessee recorded a season-high seven sacks against Utah State, including four in the first quarter alone. Leading the Blue Raider sack party today were **Antoi Antoine Owens** and **Erik Walden** with two apiece. The seven sacks are the second-most in school history, tying the seven against Murray State on November 14, 1987.

DEFENSE WITH A STAND: The Blue Raider defense held Utah State to 156 yards of total offense, the first time Middle Tennessee has held an opponent under 200 yards since November 3, 2001 versus Arkansas State (174). The most recent time the Blue Raiders held a team to as few as 156 yards was November 11, 1997 against Austin Peay (153). Today's performance marks the second time in the I-A era the Blue Raiders have held a team under 200 yards of total offense, with the other coming October 14, 2000, against Louisiana-Monroe.

MARKS PASSES COUNTS: With 22 completions today against Utah State, QB **Clint Marks** surpassed Wes Counts for the second-most completions in a single season. For the year, Marks has 202 completions, which is only 47 shy of Counts' all-time record of 249 set in 1999. Counts tallied 188 completions in 2001.

WRIGHT PASSES MOSTILLER: **Kerry Wright's** 58-yard touchdown reception in the first half and his 42-yarder in the second half went down as the 18th and 19th of his career and

enabled him to surpass Demetric Mostiller for third place on the all-time list. The East Point, Ga., native now needs two more this season to tie Kendall Newson and Herbert Owenby for the all-time touchdown receiving record (21).

CAREER DAY FOR CHICOLA: Freshman tight end Stephen Chicola enjoyed his best game as a collegian in the win over Utah State. The Jacksonville, Fla., native caught a personal-best four passes for a career-best 69 yards against the Aggies. His four grabs bested his previous mark of three set against Arkansas State.

WRIGHT OVER 100: WR **Kerry Wright** topped the 100-yard receiving mark for the fourth time this season and the ninth time in his career. Wright finished today with nine catches for 167 yards and a touchdown. The senior's nine 100-yard receiving games rank second all-time behind Kendall Newson's 14.

DON'T BET ON IT: The NCAA Sports Wagering Task Force and the American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) have partnered to distribute more than 150,000 "NCAA Don't Bet On It" wristbands created by the NCAA national office. Head football coaches and their staff will wear the wristbands today in conjunction with the National Sports Wagering Awareness Day developed by the NCAA Sports Wagering Task Force.

HEAVY HEART: Middle Tennessee backup fullback **Ralph Gunter** played in today's game, but with a heavy heart. During today's team pregame meal, Gunter received a call letting him know that his mother, Victoria, had passed away. The Hephzibah, Ga., native elected to play this afternoon stating "that is what my mother would have wanted me to do." Gunter was presented with a game ball in the locker room after the contest.

TIDBITS: Former Blue Raider stars Tyrone Calico, Dwone Hicks, Randy Arnold and Andrico Hines were on the sidelines for today's Homecoming game ... QB **Clint Marks** passed for over 200 yards for the seventh time this season and the eighth of his career and is now tied with Teddy Morris for fourth place all-time in that category ... Middle Tennessee's defense held Utah State without a first down until the 11:08 mark of the second quarter ... WR **Kerry Wright** has now caught at least two passes in 20 straight games ... With a touchdown on its opening drive of the game, Middle Tennessee has earned points on its first drive of the game four times over the past five outings this season ... **Colby Smith** booted a career long 56-yard punt in the first quarter to beat his previous best of 55 yards (Louisiana-Lafayette) ... **Colby Smith** missed a 35-yard field goal in the second quarter to break a streak of seven consecutive made three-pointers. Smith is now 9-of-11 this season, with his only other miss coming at Louisiana-Lafayette.

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