Blue Raiders Drop 44-10 Decision at NMSU

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LAS CRUCES, N.M. -- Middle Tennessee trailed by seven points at the half and was completely dominated in the second half, dropping a 44-10 decision to New Mexico State Saturday night at Aggie Memorial Stadium. Colby Smith made a 41-yard field goal and Nick McAfee caught an eight-yard touchdown pass in the first half, as the Blue Raiders trailed 17-10 at the break. But all six offensive possessions in the second half were three plays or less, and the Aggies rolled up 27 points. Middle Tennessee (4-5, 3-3 SBC) host Louisiana-Monroe on Senior Day next Saturday at 2:05 p.m. at Floyd Stadium.

STRUGGLING OFFENSE: The Middle Tennessee offense had its worst outing of the season by managing just 151 yards of total offense, 10 points and giving up five sacks. In 14 drives, the Blue Raiders had three or less plays nine times and four drives went for negative yards. The potent duo of QB Clint Marks and WR Kerry Wright were held in check by the Aggies. Marks, who entered the game ranked eighth nationally in total offense, was just 14-of-28 through the air for 124 yards and two interceptions, while Wright was held to just two catches for seven yards. **21 AND COUNTING:** With Alvin Fite's quarterback sack in the second quarter, the Blue Raiders ran their season total to 21. That mark ranks tied for third all-time with the 1996 team. The all-time team record is 27 set by the 2001 squad. **MAKING THEM COUNT:** Fullback Nick McAfee, who has never had a rushing attempt, registered his third career touchdown reception and the first of the season when he hauled one in from eight yards in the second quarter. For his career, McAfee has nine receptions and three of them have gone for scores. It was also McAfee's third catch this year. **SMITH HAS SOLID DAY:** Placekicker and punter Colby Smith was about the only bright spot in the loss to NMSU. Smith connected on a 41-yard field goal in his only attempt and ran his season total to 11-for-13. The sophomore also enjoyed a solid day punting by booting seven for an average of 46.1 yards. On his first punt of the night, Smith equaled his career long with a 56-yarder. **TIDBITS:** Middle Tennessee's streak of not allowing a point ended at seven quarters when the Aggies got on the board in the second quarter ... The Blue Raiders started four freshmen on defense tonight against NMSU ... DE Antoine Owens made his first collegiate start tonight against NMSU ... P Colby Smith equaled his career long punt with a 56-yarder on his first attempt of the game ... WR Kerry Wright has now

caught at least two passes in 21 straight games ... Middle Tennessee fell to 1-3 on the season in night games with the loss to NMSU and 4-5 all-time against SBC teams ... The 34-point loss to NMSU was the largest margin of defeat for the Blue Raiders in league play. The previous worst loss was a 21-point defeat at Utah State last season ... Redshirt freshman Sam Hunt saw his first collegiate action at quarterback late in the fourth quarter against NMSU ... Wright was held to just two catches in the game, his lowest reception total since catching two balls at Idaho last season.

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