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## Football provides happy Homecoming for students, alum

### Blue Raiders secure 24-21 win

Athletic Communications

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**MURFREESBORO, Tenn.** - Football players at Middle Tennessee made sure the students and alumni enjoyed a happy Homecoming as the Blue Raiders raced out to a fast start and held on for a 24-21 win against ULM at Floyd Stadium Saturday afternoon.

The Blue Raiders jumped out to a 17-0 lead early in the second quarter and after ULM had pulled to within 17-14 late in the third, Middle Tennessee built its lead back to 10 and secured the Homecoming win to improve to 3-6 overall and 2-3 in the Sun Belt. ULM dropped to 3-7 and 2-4.

Senior quarterback [Joe Craddock](#) stepped up in the Homecoming contest, completing 13-of-20 passes for 216 yards and a touchdown. Sophomore signal-caller [Dwight Dasher](#) also had an efficient game with 62 yards passing, including a touchdown. He led a pair of first-half scoring drives. Seven different players caught passes, led by [Patrick Honeycutt's](#) four receptions for 67 yards. Honeycutt and junior [Eldred King](#) each hauled in touchdown passes.

Junior tailback [Phillip Tanner](#) also had a good all-around day with 43 yards receiving to go with his 40 yards on the ground, which included the game-sealing touchdown from six yards out late in the fourth quarter. Freshman kicker [Alan Gendreau](#) added a field goal to extend his streak to seven straight makes.

It was also another stellar day for the defense. The blue-clad defenders were swarming to the ball from the outset and collected 13 tackles for loss, including five sacks. Lonnie Clemmons led the way with two sacks, and [Danny Carmichael](#), [Ted Riley](#) and [Chris McCoy](#) each had one. Carmichael led all defenders with nine tackles, all solo, two tackles for loss and one sack. Defensive lineman [Brandon Perry](#) also collected his first career interception in the win.

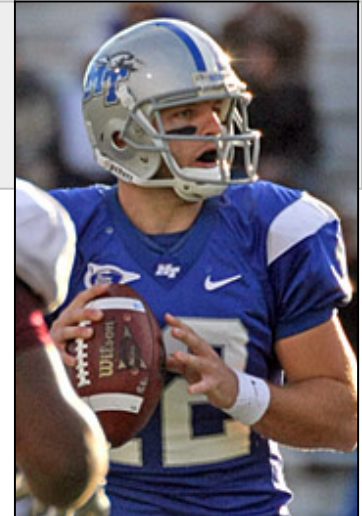
Middle Tennessee jumped out to the early lead when Craddock rifled a 15-yard touchdown strike to [Eldred King](#) to cap a spectacular opening drive. Craddock was 4-for-4 for 74 yards on the six-play, 76-yard scoring effort. Gee's 26-yard catch-and-run to the Warhawks' 13 set up the touchdown pass. It was Craddock's 22nd career touchdown, tying for with Bob Hallum for ninth on the Blue Raider career list.

The Blue Raiders extended their lead to 14-0 two series later after a stellar special teams play set up another score. [Jeremy Kellem](#) partially blocked a punt to give Middle Tennessee possession on its 47 on the third possession. Dasher came on for his first series and promptly delivered an impressive scoring drive with pinpoint accuracy through the air. Dasher connected with Honeycutt for a 13-yard touchdown pass in the back corner of the end zone. The two connected for two passes for 36 yards on the six-play, 53-yard drive.

Gendreau continued his strong freshman season one possession later when he staked the Blue Raiders to a 17-0 lead with a 44-yard field goal early in the second quarter. His seventh consecutive made field goal moved him into second all-time for consecutive makes at Middle Tennessee. Gendreau's strong leg capped a seven-play, 43-yard drive that seemingly gave the Blue Raiders a comfortable Homecoming cushion but the Warhawks would not go quietly.

The Warhawks got on the scoreboard for the first time when Frank Goodin scored from 15 yards out to pull the visitors within 17-7 with less than five minutes remaining in the half. Lancaster's 27-yard pass play to Zeek Zacharie moved the Warhawks into Blue Raider territory for the first time since their opening drive. It also enabled the Warhawks to stay within striking distance going into the half.

ULM continued its momentum into the third quarter and took advantage of a critical Middle Tennessee turnover and the team's inability to move the ball. The Warhawks pulled to within 17-14 when Kinsmon Lancaster hooked up with Anthony McCall for an 18-yard touchdown with 8:57 remaining in the third quarter. The ULM drive started after it recovered Honeycutt's fumble on a punt return near midfield.



Quarterback Joe Craddock threw for more than 200 yards and a touchdown in Middle Tennessee's 24-21 win against ULM. (B. Lambert)

The Warhawks missed an opportunity to tie the game when kicker Radi Jabour missed left on a 32-yard field goal attempt as time expired in the third quarter. It was a quarter the Blue Raiders were glad to get behind them as they managed just two three-and-outs, gained five net yards and fumbled a punt return.

Middle Tennessee finally was able to put some breathing room between it and the visitors on the first drive of the fourth quarter. Tanner's 7-yard run capped a nine-play, 80-yard drive that provided the Blue Raiders a 24-17 lead with 11:55 remaining. Craddock completed five passes on the drive but none was bigger than a 14-yarder to [Byron McLeod](#) that moved the ball to the seven, where it was first-and-goal. Tanner bullied his way in from the 7 to extend the lead on the next play.

It proved to be a good thing because ULM came back with a long scoring drive to keep the Homecoming celebration on hold. Lancaster's 17-yard touchdown to Zeek Zacharie capped a 72-yard drive to close the score to within 24-21 with less than six minutes remaining.

Middle Tennessee was essentially able to run out the clock, keeping the ball for all but 42 seconds of the remaining 5:57. ULM had a last-ditch effort to send the game to overtime but the Blue Raider defense rose to the occasion and put an end to any comeback hopes when [Lonnie Clemons](#) sacked Lancaster with less than 18 seconds remaining. It was the fifth sack of the game for the stop squad, including two for Clemons.

Middle Tennessee faces rival WKU at noon in Bowling Green, Ky.

#### **MIDDLE TENNESSEE POSTGAME QUOTES**

##### **HEAD COACH RICK STOCKSTILL**

###### **On the Homecoming win:**

"It was a great game, great win for us, and I am very proud of the way our guys played today."

###### **On the start by the offense:**

"We had a great week and we have practiced well all year. Our guys are focused and they practice with a purpose. They are working and competing to get better and we saw that again this week at practice. I thought we came out very focused, we had a great plan, and our mental intensity was at a very high level. I thought the opening drive was a great drive. We mixed it up with run and pass and it was a confidence booster for the offense to come out and do that."

###### **On quarterback's [Joe Craddock](#) and [Dwight Dasher](#):**

"I thought both quarterbacks did well Dwight (Dasher) did well. I have so much confidence in both quarterbacks and we can win with both of them. Both quarterbacks led two scoring drives today and that was important."

###### **On the offense stepping up in the fourth quarter:**

"We were fortunate to be where we were in the fourth quarter after the mistakes we made in the third quarter. We had to have people step up and do something and that's why I am so proud of the offense. We had to have a scoring drive and they provided one, and then after ULM scored to cut it to three again, our offense went out there and picked up two big first downs. I thought that drive was as critical as any in the game."

###### **On the defense:**

"We made some big plays throughout the game but we made some big ones in that third quarter when ULM made some runs at us. I thought we got a lot of pressure and, for the most part, got off the field when we needed to do that."

##### **WR PATRICK HONEYCUTT**

###### **On the fast start by the offense to start the game:**

"We had a great week of practice and everyone was clicking. We talked all week about coming out strong and today we did that."

###### **What were you telling the younger players when you got up 17-0 early?**

"We just tried to keep everyone focused on the sideline and let them know there is tons of time to play and they all understood that. We didn't get comfortable. We knew we had to keep it going and we did enough to get the win."

###### **On the 80-yard fourth quarter drive to seal the win:**

"That was a huge drive, huge plays. Everything went perfect. The line was blocking well, ([Phillip Tanner](#)) was running hard and we made several big plays. That was a huge drive for our football team to not only get this win but gain some momentum."

##### **LB IVON HICKMON**

###### **On ULM quarterback Kinsmon Lancaster:**

"He is a real good player and we knew that from previous years. He has great speed and is a tough quarterback to break down. We had to try and contain him and not let him win the game for them."

###### **On the big plays by the defense to protect the lead:**

"It speaks a lot to our defense. We bend but we don't break. We never give up and that is something you saw here today."

**On preparing for ULM quarterback's Lancaster and Trey Revell:**

"We knew Revell was also a good quarterback so it didn't matter who started. We were prepared for either quarterback and overall I thought we did a pretty good job today. We knew this was a passing team and as a defense we had to click."

**POSTGAME NOTES**

**BLUE RAIDERS TIE MEAN GREEN:** Middle Tennessee's win over ULM on Saturday was its 30th Sun Belt Conference win since joining the league in 2001. The 30 wins equal the most in league history with North Texas.

**GEE NEW ALL-TIME LEADER:** Junior [Desmond Gee](#) tallied 59 kickoff return yards against ULM to become the new all-time leader in that category in school history. Gee, who now has 1,231 career return yards, broke the previous mark of 1,178 yards set by Brigham Lyons from 1992 to 1995.

**CRADDOCK TIES HALLUM:** Senior quarterback [Joe Craddock](#) tossed his 22nd career touchdown when he hit [Eldred King](#) on a 15-yard pass in the first quarter. The 22 TDs ties Craddock with Bob Hallum for ninth place on the all-time list. Craddock now has 10 touchdown passes on the season and all 22 career scoring strikes have come in the last 21 games.

**CRADDOCK MOVES UP LIST:** [Joe Craddock](#) recorded his ninth 200-yard passing game in the win over ULM and moved up two spots on the all-time passing yardage list. Craddock moved into 11th place and surpassed Mickey Corwin for 12th and Mike Robinson for 11th after registering 216 yards against the Warhawks. Craddock now has 3,306 career passing yards.

**KELLEM GETS BLOCK:** Sophomore [Jeremy Kellem](#) came up with his second career blocked punt when he rejected one against ULM in the first quarter. The block setup a touchdown to put the Blue Raiders ahead, 14-0. It went down as the fourth blocked kick under Rick Stockstill and the 25th of the FBS era (9 punts, 9 field goals, 7 PATs).

**GENDREAU CONTINUES STREAK:** True freshman [Alan Gendreau](#) connected on a career long 42-yard field goal against ULM in the second quarter to run his streak seven consecutive made three-pointers. The seven in a row equals the second longest streak in school history and stands just one back of the all-time record of eight set by Kelly Potter in 1984.

**PICK FOR PERRY:** Defensive lineman [Brandon Perry](#) recorded his first career interception when he hauled in a deflected pass in the third quarter. It marked the 10th interception by the defense this season and the first by a defensive lineman since both Tavares Jones and Erik Walden recorded one each at North Texas in 2007.

**QUICK HITTERS:** DT [Trevor Jenkins](#) made his team-best 34th straight start ... Freshman [Derrick Crumpton](#) made his first career start today against ULM as the defense began the game with six defensive backs ... Middle Tennessee scored on its opening drive against ULM for just the second time this season (also had a TD against Maryland) ... The 14 first quarter points by MT matched its season high set against Louisville ... In 21 career games played, [Jeremy Kellem](#) has now been responsible for 14 turnovers following his blocked punt against ULM ... [Dwight Dasher's](#) touchdown pass to [Patrick Honeycutt](#) was the second of the season and the 11th for his career ... [David DeFatta's](#) 64-yard punt in the third quarter was the longest of the season ... TE Bryon McLeod made his first career reception against ULM in the fourth quarter ... Middle Tennessee improved to 47-19-2 on Homecoming, including 2-1 under Stockstill. The Blue Raiders have won 18 of their past 21 Homecoming games.

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