Kanaskie closing in on 1,000-point club

Knocks down five 3-pointers but Blue Raiders fall 82-69 at Belmont

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NASHVILLE - Four Middle Tennessee players scored double figures and the team had one of its better shooting nights; however, it wasn't enough as Belmont also had the hot hand and turned back the Blue Raiders, 82-69, at the Curb Event Center Wednesday. Kevin Kanaskie led a balanced scoring attack with 15 points on the strength of five 3-pointers, dished out four assists and collected two steals. Kanaskie moved into 29th on the all-time scoring list at Middle Tennessee and now has 977 career points, needing just 23 to join teammate Desmond "Boogie" Yates as teammates in the 1,000-point club. Senior guard Demetrius Green finished with 14 points on 6-of-9 shooting and added three assists and two steals. Junior forward Montarrio Haddock continued his strong play with 13 points and a game-high eight rebounds in 26 minutes of action. Yates also finished with 13 points to reach 1,020 career points and passed former standout Roni Bailey (1,016 points) for 26th on the all-time scoring list. The Blue Raiders (4-5) shot 52.7 percent from the field, including 40 percent from 3-point range but Belmont (4-3) also had a strong shooting night and Middle Tennessee was unable to get crucial stops at key points in the game. The Bruins, who were led by Alex Renfroe's 25 points and 22 from Andy Wicke, shot 53.8 percent from the field, including

42.9 percent from the 3-point line. "Belmont is a good team and they shot the ball well tonight, but we didn't do a good enough job defensively when we rotated and that left some people open," Middle Tennessee Head Coach Kermit Davis said. "You can't leave good shooters open or they generally will make you pay and Belmont's did tonight. We have to do a better job defensively and that's usually one of our strong suits. We shot the ball well enough tonight, especially in the second half, but we couldn't get stops when we needed them." Middle Tennessee trailed 44-31 at the half but the Blue Raiders put together a strong run in the second half and had pulled to within seven, 59-52, on Kanaskie's 3-pointer with 12:56 remaining. Kanaskie knocked down four of his five 3-pointers during the second half when the Blue Raiders were trying to rally. Belmont answered Middle Tennessee's run with one of its own and ran the lead back to 15 with 10:04 remaining and from there the Blue Raiders were never able to get closer than nine. Middle Tennessee will continue its busy trek with three games in three days beginning Saturday at the Basketball Travelers Tipoff Tournament at Missouri State. The Blue Raiders will face UC-Irvine in the opening game of the tournament Saturday at 5:35 p.m. They face Norfolk State Sunday at 5:30 p.m., before closing the tournament against host Missouri State Monday at 8:35 p.m.

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