

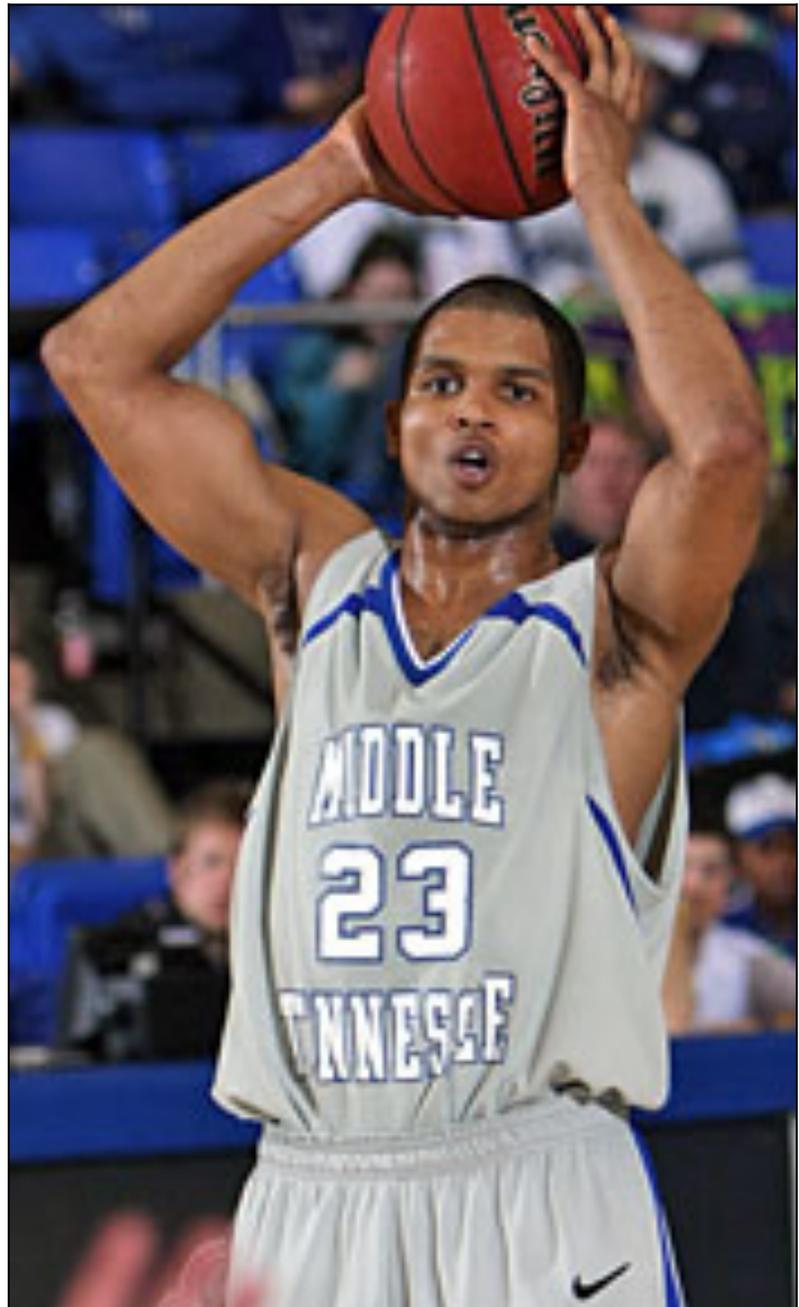
# Yates, Green combine for 54 points in Blue Raiders' 89-77 win

## Four reach double figures to pace road triumph

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### HOUSTON - Desmond

"Boogie" Yates and Demetrius Green combined for 54 points and four Blue Raiders reached double figures as Middle Tennessee secured an 89-77 win against Houston Baptist at Sharp Gym Saturday night. Yates has produced many memorable performances in his three seasons but he fashioned the most prolific offensive performance by a Blue Raider in more than five years with a career-high 32 points on 13-of-18 shooting against the Huskies. It equaled the most points by a Blue Raider since William Pippen's 32 against FIU, Feb. 22, 2003. He scored 20 of his 32 in the first half to ignite Middle Tennessee's strong offensive outing. "I was able to get into a good rhythm early and my teammates did a great job of getting me the ball in scoring position," Yates said. "The biggest thing is that we got a road win and those are always nice. We all put together good offensive games and that's why we won. We have to keep it going offensively but we



have to continue to improve our defense with a big conference road game coming up at Troy (Thursday). While Yates was a scoring machine, he was not alone as the Blue Raiders improved to 15-9 and won for the 11th time in 15 games. Green was equally impressive with 22 points on 6-of-11 shooting, including 3-of-5 from 3-point range. He was two points shy of his career high and also led

Middle Tennessee with eight rebounds. Yates and Green were a two-man wrecking crew but they were not alone. Nigel Johnson tallied 13 points, dished out five assists and tied his career high with five steals to move into 13th all-time with 86. Kevin Kanaskie also reached double figures with 10 points but his greatest contribution was back-to-back 3-pointers to break the game open with less than six minutes remaining. Calvin O'Neil narrowly missed double figures with eight points and he pulled six rebounds. "We had some players step up and play well in this game and they had to because Houston Baptist played well," Middle Tennessee Head Coach Kermit Davis said. "I know people think it is coach speak but that team has some talented players and we had to play well to get the win. I'm proud of our team and the effort we gave. How good were 'Boogie' and 'Duna'? We had several guys step and it was a very good offensive performance." Middle Tennessee owned a slim 41-38 lead at halftime but stretched the advantage to 52-44 on the second of two Green free throws with 17:49 remaining. Houston Baptist battled back and narrowed the deficit to 63-61 with 11:00 remaining. It remained competitive until Kanaskie provided the dagger with two clutch 3-pointers down the stretch. Leading 73-69, Kanaskie drained a long 3-pointer to stretch the lead to 76-69 with 6:05 remaining and, on Middle Tennessee's next possession, added another trey to extend the lead to 79-69 with 5:08 remaining and the game never was in doubt from there. The Blue Raiders shot a sizzling 52 percent (30-of-58) in one of their best offensive performances of the season and they were 14-of-25 for 56 percent in the decisive second half. Middle Tennessee also shot 89 percent (24-of-27) from the charity stripe, and won the rebounding battle 33-27. Middle Tennessee continues its three-game road swing in a pivotal Sun Belt Conference game at Troy Thursday.

**NOTES:** Middle Tennessee won for the 11th time in 15 games ... With a career-high 32 points Saturday, Desmond "Boogie" Yates has four of the top 25 single-game scoring efforts in program history. Yates tied his career high of 13 field goals made and led the team in scoring for the 43rd time in 88 career games. He also reached double figures for the 66th time ... Yates has 24 career games with 20-plus points and the Blue Raiders are 18-6 in those games, including 8-2 this season ... Nigel Johnson is 10th all-time in career assists and his five helpers against Houston Baptist pulled him to within four of ninth on the all-time list. Johnson also tied his career high of five steals in the game and has 86 for his career good for 13th all-time at Middle Tennessee ... With two 3-pointers against Houston Baptist; Kevin Kanaskie now has 193 for his career. Already the all-time assists leader, Kanaskie added two more against the Huskies to top the 470-mark. He has 471. Kanaskie ranks 35th nationally in free-throw percentage at 86 percent (69-80). He was 2-of-2 from the line against Houston Baptist and has converted 21 straight ... Demetrius Green scored a season-high 22 points against Houston Baptist and was just two points off his career high of 24 ... The Blue Raiders have scored 80-plus in a game eight times this season and are 8-0 in those games. They are 37-1 under Head Coach Kermit Davis when scoring 80 or more, including 22 straight wins ... The Blue Raiders improved to 88-15 when leading at the half (13-0 this season) and 99-13 when leading with five minutes remaining (12-0 this season) under Davis ... Middle Tennessee is 28-18 in February under Davis.

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