

February 15, 2009

First-half deficit too much to overcome in SBC setback

Blue Raiders drop 89-78 decision

Athletic Communications

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee put forth a strong second-half effort but the Blue Raiders dug themselves too much of a first half deficit to overcome in an 89-78 loss against North Texas in front of 4,214 at Murphy Center Saturday.

The Blue Raiders trailed 43-24 at intermission after struggling from the field and offering little resistance defensively. Middle Tennessee (15-11, 8-6) battled throughout the second half but the damage already was done.

Desmond "Boogie" Yates led the Blue Raiders with 19 points, **Kevin Kanaskie** provided 15 points, five rebounds and three assists, and **Montarrio Haddock** finished with 12 points and three rebounds. Freshman Demario Williams earned his second career start and finished with eight points in 18 minutes.

Calvin O'Neil (8) and **Nigel Johnson** (7) combined for 15 points and saw limited action in the second half. Senior guard **Demetrius Green** did not play in the second half and finished with three points.

Coach Kermit Davis employed the services of three walk-ons - **Lindal Yarbrough**, **John Hopson** and K.C. Anuna, as well as Williams, in the second half and the Blue Raiders made strides. Though they did not get to within double figures in the second half they did put narrow the gap on several occasions and essentially won the second half, 54-46.

North Texas, which received 26 points from Josh White and 24 from Adam McCoy, shot 60 percent (29-48) from the field. The Mean Green scorched the nets for 63 percent (17-of-27) in the first half, including 7-of-11 from 3-point range. They ended up shooting 53 percent from beyond the 3-point line for the game.

Middle Tennessee, on the other hand, came out cold and connected on just 6-of-24 shots in the first half. The Blue Raiders shot 56 percent (18-of-32) in the second half but the early shooting woes, coupled with North Texas' strong start, was too much to overcome.

The Blue Raiders return to action when they play host to South Alabama Thursday at 7 p.m.



Kevin Kanaskie finished with 15 points, five rebounds and three assists against North Texas. (B. Lambert) 

