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Blue Raiders Address Perimeter Needs With Addition Of Three Guards On Signing Day

MT Media Relations

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - The NCAA spring signing period began with a bang for the Middle Tennessee men's basketball program as Head Coach Kermit Davis announced the signing of three highly-sought guards, Emanuel "Bud" Howard and Marques "Doc" Dawson, from Lincoln Trail (Ill.) Community College, and Adam Vogelsberg, from Cloud County (Kansas) Community College on Wednesday.

The trio will give the Blue Raiders much needed depth at the guard positions and provide them with players capable of coming into the program and making an immediate impact, according to Davis.

"These players will be welcomed additions to our team. They are good students who I believe will excel in the classroom at Middle Tennessee," Davis said. "They will provide us great depth and impact our program next year. We need some immediate help in the perimeter and I think these guys will be good players for us.

"I thought (Vogelsberg) was one of the best shooters that I saw in junior college basketball this year," Davis said. "He's left-handed, has very good range and can really pass the ball. He's a really good team guy, moves without the ball and I think he will fit very well in our system.

"Bud gives us an athletic, tough combo guard that can play all three positions," Davis continued. "We were familiar with Bud because he's from Baton Rouge, La., and we followed his high school and AAU basketball. I thought those relationships with all of us (while at LSU) helped us in his recruiting. Bud is a very good finisher and will give us explosiveness in the perimeter. Dawson is a very good shooter, he's a long guy, and I believe he has great upside. By his own admission, he needs to get stronger in the weight room. He's an athletic player, and I think he will be real receptive to coaching.

Vogelsberg said the opportunity to fill a need and the relationship he developed with the Middle Tennessee coaching staff weighed heavily in his decision.

"I like the coaching staff at Middle Tennessee a lot and they did a good job recruiting me," Vogelsberg said. "Knowing they were short on guards and that I have a chance to step in and help immediately also was important. More than anything, I am glad to have signed and have the decision behind me, and I feel like it's a very good decision for me."

Cloud County Head Coach Kevin Muff said he believes Vogelsberg will be a fine addition to the Middle Tennessee squad.

"First of all, Adam is a very good student of the game," Muff said. "He understands the game and plays very smart. He is not a great athlete by Division I standards but he gets a lot done because he knows how to play. He puts in a lot of hours in the gym and he is very dedicated to the sport. He's one of those kids that every time he shoots it looks it's going in. I think he definitely will be a positive addition at Middle Tennessee."

The same can be said for Howard and Dawson as the teammates prepare to bring their skills to Middle Tennessee. Howard was Player of the Year in the Great Rivers Athletic Conference and also was named a Division I second-team All-American. Both Howard and Dawson played in the Illinois All-Star game against the National Junior College All-Stars after helping lead Lincoln Trail to the Region 24 championship and finishing one win shy of the Junior College National Tournament.

Both Howard and Dawson made their official visit to Middle Tennessee three weeks ago and said they knew right away they wanted to become Blue Raiders.

"I feel Middle Tennessee has a good program and it's a good situation for me," Howard said. "After my visit there I couldn't wait to get to Middle Tennessee. I knew during my visit this is where I wanted to be and I'm glad it worked out."

Dawson said Middle Tennessee was a perfect fit for him and looks forward to the opportunity to continue his college career playing alongside Howard.

"I think having a teammate such as (Howard) sign at the same place would be an advantage for anyone," Dawson said. "We know how each other plays and that helps. It's good to know we have a chance to step in and contribute."

Lincoln Trail Head Coach Everick Sullivan said the Blue Raiders are getting two talented players capable of stepping in and adding to what already is a growing program.

"(Howard) was Player of the Year in the conference and a second-team All-American," Sullivan said. "He's a combo guard, can really play both positions, can certainly run the point. He's a great competitor and he does things that you can't teach. He works

hard on both ends of the floor and is a tenacious defender. The strength of his offensive game is his ability to get to the basket, his slashing. He can hit the outside shot, too, though, if you play off of him.

"(Dawson) was my starting three man this season, but he'll play the 2 or 3 in college. His strength is his ability to play the passing lane on defense. He's quick and very long. On offense, Marques is a slasher. He's athletic, gets to the hole, but can also shoot the three."

Davis said the coaching all three have received at the junior college level will be an asset as they make the transition to the Blue Raider program.

"Kevin Muff is an outstanding junior college coach at Cloud County," Davis said. "I think Adam has been coached very well for two years. (Muff) played at Kansas State so he has a very good understanding about over level. I think Adam's adjustment will be quicker because of how he was taught the last two years.

"Coach Sullivan is a former great player at Louisville. I think he knows a lot about player development at our level and really helped these (Howard) and (Dawson) quite a bit. There's always going to be adjustments but guys that come from programs like Lincoln Trail and Cloud County have an easier adjustment because of the demands that have been put on them on and off the floor."

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