Phil Steele preseason publication cites numerous Blue Raiders

15 Middle Tennessee football players named preseason All-SBC

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee is well represented on Phil Steele's 2009 Preseason All-Sun Belt Conference team with 15 Blue Raiders earning recognition. The Blue Raiders had seven players listed on offense, six on defense and two on special teams. Junior offensive lineman Jamal Lewis was Middle Tennessee's only first-team selection. Also earning preseason attention on offense was receiver Malcolm Beyah (second team), running back Phillip Tanner, receiver Eldred King, offensive lineman Mark Fisher (third team); along with offensive lineman Mark Thompson and running back/receiver Desmond Gee (fourth team). Middle Tennessee's defensive selections were defensive tackle Brandon Perry, linebacker Danny Carmichael, safety Jeremy Kellem (second team); tackle Dwight Smith, corner Alex Suber (third team), and end Jarrett Crittenton (fourth team). Kicker Alan Gendreau and punter David DeFatta were named to the preseason third team. "It's always good when your players receive attention and these players have put themselves in good company based on what they have either done to this point or the potential for what they can do," Middle Tennessee Head Football Coach Rick Stockstill said. "Preseason honors are nice but I hope to see all of them on these types of lists at the end of the season, along with several more." Lewis was named to Phil Steele's All-SBC second team following the 2008 season when he was one of four Blue Raider offensive linemen to start all 12 games. His 815 snaps ranked third among linemen.

Beyah enjoyed a breakout freshman season in 2008 when he was named third-team All-SBC by Phil Steele, The Daily News Journal All-Freshman Team and Rivals.com SBC All-Freshman team. He played in all 12 games and earned eight starts. Beyah was third on the team with 33 receptions and he led the team in touchdowns with six. One of his biggest moments also happened to be one of college football's top plays in 2008 when Beyah hauled in a 32-yard Hail Mary on the game's final play to beat Florida Atlantic on national television. It capped a five-catch, 90-yard performance. Carmichael also had his best season as a Blue Raider as a junior in 2008 when he was named third-team All-SBC by Phil Steele. The hard-hitting linebacker played in all 12 games and had 11 starts. He led the team with 89 tackles, including 11.5 for loss, three sacks, an interception, two forced fumbles and three pass breakups. Kellem continued to establish himself as a ball-hawking safety as a sophomore in 2008. He was named second-team All-SBC by league coaches and media. He started 12 games and finished third on the team with 72 tackles. He also had two interceptions, two fumble recoveries, three forced fumbles and a blocked kick. Perry also enjoyed his best season in 2008 - his junior campaign. Perry played in all 12 games and was in on 326 total snaps, including a season-best 47 at Kentucky. The Blue Raiders open the 2009 season against Clemson at 5 p.m., Sept. 5. The game will be available on ESPN360.com.

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