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## Floyd Stadium-record crowd witnesses Blue Raider win

Athletic Communications

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**MURFREESBORO, Tenn.** - Blackout proved once again to be a winning theme for the Middle Tennessee football team as they rode the back of quarterback [Dwight Dasher](#) in earning its first victory of the season, a 31-14 decision against Memphis, in front of a Floyd Stadium-record 28,105 in attendance in the home opener in Murfreesboro, Tenn., Saturday evening. It kicked-off the 74th season of Blue Raider football at its home venue and surpassed the previous stadium attendance mark of 27,568 against Tennessee State Sept. 5, 1998.

Dasher ended the contest with 320 combined yards, including an 18-of-26 and two touchdown effort through the air. He also had a team-best outing of 17 carries for 89 yards on the ground, outgaining the Tiger offense by himself by 101 yards. Through the first two games, Dasher has accounted for 585 of the team's 735 total yards, a 80.0 percentage.

Dasher also has played solidly in his two career games against Memphis. In just his third career start in 2007, the Folkston, Ga., native was responsible for 410 of the team's 490 yards. During that victory, he accumulated 230 yards by air and 180 on the ground, which still stands as the school record for single-game rushing yards by a quarterback in school history.



Dwight Dasher finished with 320 of the Blue Raiders' 436 total offensive yards Saturday in the win against Memphis. ()

After being stopped on its first two plays, Middle Tennessee used a 21-yard carry by Dasher to free itself from inside its own 5-yard line. [Phillip Tanner](#) then reeled off an 18-yard sprint to push the Blue Raiders closer to midfield on the next play.

[Malcolm Beyah](#) then took the Dasher lateral and completed a 41-yard pass to [Garrett Andrews](#) down to the Tigers' four. Tanner then completed the nine-play, 96-yard, 3:00 drive with a four-yard dash to the right pylon for the game's first score at 10:30, giving the Blue Raiders an early 7-0 lead.

Memphis responded with a methodical drive of its own, including a 14-run by T.J. Pitts and 13-yard keeper from quarterback Arkelon Hall. Curtis Steele moved the Tigers into the red-zone area with a 15-yard rush. Steele found paydirt three plays later with a 12-yard touchdown rush to the left corner to cap a nine-play, 69-yard, 4:20 drive at the 6:10 mark of the opening quarter to knot the scoring at 7-7.

The two teams traded possessions for the next couple series. Memphis' Matt Reagan launched a 40-yard punt to the Blue Raider 23, but MT's [Patrick Honeycutt](#) bobbled the catch before recovering the loose ball for a loss of two to pin Middle Tennessee to the 21-yard line to start the final drive of the first quarter before punting to start the second.

Following another MT punt just past mid-field, [Kenneth Gilstrap](#) forced returner D.A. Griffin to fumble with Gilstrap picking up the loose ball, returning it to the Blue Raider side, and continuing the Blue Raider drive at the Tiger 43. A 10-yard holding penalty backed Middle Tennessee (1-1) up to its own 47 to begin the drive. Dasher then found [Shane Blissard](#) wide open between the hashes for a 40-yard touchdown strike at 10:02 and a 14-7 Blue Raider margin. Middle Tennessee drove quickly down the field, finding the end zone on only three plays and 43 yards in 1:45.

A second-straight three-and-out by the Tigers set up Dasher, as he went up the middle for a 42-yard carry before being forced out of bounds at the Memphis 15 on the first play of MT's drive which began at the 7:39 mark of the second quarter. The Tiger defense stood firm and the Blue Raiders used a 28-yard field goal by [Alan Gendreau](#) at 6:14 to increase its lead to 17-7 as part of a five-play, 47-yard drive using 1:25 off the clock.

Memphis (0-2) was forced into its third three-and-out of the quarter on its next possession. Dasher then completed a 22-yard attempt to [Chris McClover](#) on the Blue Raiders' first play, advancing the ball to midfield. A bad snap miscue backed Middle Tennessee up to its own 30 on the next play. Tanner attempted to move MT back to its original line of scrimmage but the ball was knocked loose by Alton Starr, giving Memphis the ball back at the 42-yardline.

Two plays later, Pitts split the Blue Raider defense up the middle for a 10-yard gain and first down. However, [Danny Carmichael](#) broke free through the line for a sack and loss of eight yards on the next play. Another sack by [Chris McCoy](#) pushed the Tigers

back to the 44-yard stripe two plays later. Brown intercepted the final play of the half as the clock expired with Middle Tennessee owning the 10-point advantage.

Dasher found Honeycutt for the third Blue Raider touchdown of the game on a 24-yard cross at 2:44 of the third quarter to cap a drive which saw them cover 76 yards in 12 plays and 3:35 on the game clock. It was the only score of the period and provided MT with a solid cushion entering the final stanza.

Middle Tennessee continued a drive to open the fourth quarter and on its third play of the frame, [D.D. Kyles](#) sprinted around the left end and just inside the near pylon for his first career touchdown, increasing the margin to 31-7, at 14:15. The dash completed a nine-play, 60-yard, 2:41 drive.

Tyler Bass came into the game in the fourth quarter as the new Memphis signal-caller. He drove the Tigers to the game's final touchdown on their final possession with just 1:47 remaining. Lance Smith punched the ball over the plane from three yards out, sealing an eight-play, 48-yard drive covering 2:48.

In addition to Dasher's solid effort, Middle Tennessee controlled the offensive attack with a 436-219 yard edge, including 272 yards through the air and 164 on the ground. [Rod Issac](#) and Carmichael paced the Blue Raider defense with six tackles a piece, while Brown recorded five stops for the MT defense.

Hall was the leading passer for the Tigers with 93 yards on 13-of-22 and one interception. Pitts was the team's top rusher, gaining 40 yards on nine carries. Greg Jackson was the top Memphis tackler on the defensive side of the ball with eight stops, including seven solo tackles.

The Blue Raiders will return to the road next Saturday when they travel to College Park, Md., and look to pick up their second-straight triumph against the Maryland Terrapins at 2:30 p.m. Central. The contest can be found live on ESPN360.com.

#### MIDDLE TENNESSEE POST-GAME NOTES:

**DASHER SHINES IN HOME OPENER:** Junior quarterback [Dwight Dasher](#) thrilled the home crowd in the first game of the season at Floyd Stadium by accounting for 320 yards of Middle Tennessee's 436 yards of total offense in the win over Memphis. Dasher, who was responsible for 410 of the team's 490 total yards in the 2007 victory over Memphis, had his second straight 200-yard passing game with 231 yards, nine shy of his career high, and two touchdowns against the Tigers. It was also the fourth 200-yard passing game of his career and two have come against Memphis.

**PERFECT UNDER STOCK:** With tonight's win over Memphis, Middle Tennessee is now a perfect 3-0 under Rick Stockstill against in-state schools. Since joining the FBS in 1999, the Blue Raiders are now 8-1 against in-state competition with the lone loss coming in 2002 at Tennessee.

**DEFENSE TURNS IN STELLAR EFFORT:** Middle Tennessee's defense rose to the occasion against Memphis. The Blue Raiders held the Tigers to just 14 points and 219 total yards of offense while collecting 11 tackles for loss and two sacks. It marks the fewest yards allowed by the Middle Tennessee defense since it surrendered only 138 to Arkansas State on Oct. 20, 2007 - a 14-game span. The Blue Raiders won that contest 24-7 at Floyd Stadium.

**TANNER FINDS ENDZONE AGAIN:** Middle Tennessee running back [Phillip Tanner](#) found the end zone for the first time this season on the Blue Raiders' opening drive of the game. It was Tanner's 22nd career touchdown and the Dallas, TX native needs just two more to tie for 10th on the all-time touchdowns scored list.

**BLISSARD GETS FIRST:** WR [Shane Blissard](#), a walk-on from nearby Oakland High School, hauled in his first collegiate touchdown pass when he caught a 40-yard strike from [Dwight Dasher](#) in the second quarter against Memphis. Blissard surprisingly led the Blue Raiders last week in his first collegiate game with four receptions and finished tonight with two catches for 46 yards.

**BLACKOUT SUCCESS:** The Blue Raiders announced a Floyd Stadium record crowd of 28,105 in Saturday's home game against in-state rival Memphis. The previous record of 27,568 was set against Tennessee State on Sept. 5, 1998. Tonight was the second annual Blackout promotion and it has been a real success in the two attempts. Last year in the Blue Raiders' last second win over FAU the attendance was 25,766 making the two-game average 26,935.

**FIRST FOR KYLES:** Backup running back [D.D. Kyles](#) scored his first collegiate touchdown when he ran one in from seven yards out in the fourth quarter against Memphis. Kyles went on to enjoy a career game with five carries for a personal-best 32 yards.

**QUICK HITTERS:** Middle Tennessee won its fifth straight at Floyd Stadium ... MT is now 2-1 all-time against C-USA ... Center [Mark Thompson](#) made his team-leading 26th straight start ... Middle Tennessee's first quarter scoring drive of 96 yards was its longest since going 99 yards against ULM in 2007 - a span of 16 games ... WR [Shane Blissard](#) made his first collegiate start tonight against Memphis as did WR [Chris McClover](#) ... [Kevin Brown](#)'s interception to end the first half was the third of his career ... Freshman DE [Omar McLendon](#) played in his first collegiate game tonight ... Freshman RB [Benjamin Cunningham](#) made his Blue Raider debut at the end of the third quarter against Memphis.

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