

September 18, 2009

## Raiders seek first road win on Saturday

Blue Raiders-Terrapins kickoff at 2:32 PM CDT

*Athletic Communications*

**MURFREESBORO, Tenn.** - Middle Tennessee's football team heads to College Park, Maryland on Saturday, hoping to become the first team to win on the road in the series between the Blue Raiders and Terrapins.

Maryland holds a 2-1 edge over the Blue Raiders, winning at home in 2000 (45-27) and 2007 (24-10). Middle Tennessee won its only home game in the series last year, 24-14, to capture its first victory over a BCS school at Floyd Stadium.

As was the case in 2008, the Blue Raiders are underdogs to the Terrapins, but will rely on increased team speed and a big improvement in the redesigned spread offense to beat the odds.

Maryland coach Ralph Friedgen is 19-2 at home vs. non-conference opponents. Plus he should have no problem getting his team fired up after their loss in Murfreesboro last year.

Blue Raider head coach Rick Stockstill, as always, takes a different approach. "We can't be concerned about Maryland, and what they are going to do. All we can do is get ourselves as prepared and as motivated to play as we possibly can".

That approach resulted in improved play on offense and special teams in the win over Memphis last Saturday.

Middle Tennessee's spread offense, under the direction of first-year offensive coordinator Tony Franklin, showed much improvement against Memphis in the Raiders' 31-14 win. Led by junior quarterback [Dwight Dasher](#), the fast-paced offense rolled up 436 yards on 70 plays.

Dasher threw for 231 yards and two touchdowns, and ran for 89 more against Memphis, and was rewarded for his efforts by being named the Sun Belt Conference Offensive Player of the Week. Maryland did not get to see Dasher last year, as senior QB Joe Craddock played the entire game.

Blue Raider special teams also played much better, especially in kick coverage, against Memphis. Freshman [Kenneth Gilstrap](#) made one of the biggest plays of the game in the second quarter. In punt formation, he rocketed down the field, and smashed into the Terrapin punt returner as he caught the ball, forcing a fumble, then recovering it. It led to a three-play, 47-yard scoring drive that put the Blue Raiders ahead to stay.

Defensively, the Blue Raiders were led by a veteran secondary and a blitzing attack from all areas that disrupted the Memphis offense time and again. The Blue Raiders recorded 12 tackles for loss, two sacks and a goal-line interception by [Kevin Brown](#) that put an end to the first half.

[Alex Suber](#), a 5-9 senior cornerback, and his backfield mates, held their own against the much taller Memphis receivers. Middle Tennessee fans may remember Suber for his leaping interception in the end zone to take the ball away from Terp All-American Darius Heyward-Bey in the fourth quarter of last year's game.

Heyward-Bey has gone on to the NFL, but Maryland returns QB Chris Turner and RB Da'Rel Scott. Turner threw for 207 yards and a TD, but was intercepted three times in the game last year, while Scott rushed for 123 yards, including a 63-yard TD run for Maryland's first score.

Both teams are 1-1 vs. non-conference competition. Maryland lost to 5th-ranked California on the road, and defeated James Madison at home in overtime. Middle Tennessee lost its opener at Clemson, before rebounding to beat Memphis at home.

Game time is 2:32 pm CDT, and will air on ESPN360.com. The Blue Raider Network, featuring Chip Walters and Kelly Holcomb, can be heard on WMOT-FM 89.5 (Murfreesboro), WGNS 1450 AM 100.5 (Murfreesboro) and 101.9 FM (Murfreesboro), WNSR 560 AM (Nashville) and 103.9 FM (Bowling Green, KY). Fans can also log onto GoBlueRaiders.com to listen to the radio broadcast while also following live stats.



Alex Suber picked off a Maryland pass in the endzone last year to preserve the Blue Raider victory. (Jim Brown, US Presswire)

*Original URL: <http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/41018>*