

October 16, 2009

## Official team practice begins Friday for Blue Raiders

First practice of 2009-10 season at 5 p.m. in Murphy Center

MT Athletic Communications

**MURFREESBORO, Tenn.-** Questions require answers, and for Kermit Davis, the head men's basketball coach at Middle Tennessee, the answers will start coming late Friday afternoon.

The 2009-10 Blue Raiders will begin pre-season practice with a two-hour session from 5 to 7 p.m. in the Murphy Center. It is free and open to the public. They will hold another practice session on Saturday morning from 8 to 10 a.m., which is also open to the public.

"To date, this is the best conditioned team we have begun practice with in the last four or five years," noted Davis. "In something of a surprise, our new players as a whole are actually better conditioned than our returning players and our returning players are in good shape."

Replacing six players who graduated, including all but two of last year's backcourt, Davis will be taking a close look at seven talented newcomers.

"This is a fun group, very receptive to coaching, and they have a lot of energy," declared Davis, "They love being in the gym, they want to live in the gym. In my previous seven years, we had a few gym rats, but this is different."

In pre-season conditioning, Davis has been impressed with two junior college transfers, guards [James Washington](#) and [Rod Emanuel](#), both of whom will figure highly into plans for this coming season. Freshman guard [James Gallman](#) is expected to be one of the top perimeter shooters for the Blue Raiders.

Returning guards [Calvin O'Neil](#) and Demario Williams also drew praise from Davis. "Calvin is looking better than he ever has, and Demario has elevated his game."

"I am very pleased with how our two new big men have worked out and put on more weight and muscle," said Davis. He called 6-8 freshman J. T. Sulton "our most athletic newcomer" and 6-9 junior college transfer [Trevor Ottley](#) "our most physical big man". Sulton has gone from 188 to 205 pounds, while Ottley has added 14 pounds and is up to 210.

Back from last year's 18-win team are center [Theryn Hudson](#), and forwards [Desmond Yates](#) and [Montarrio Haddock](#). Hudson is back this season after redshirting last season due to injuries.

"Theryn is in unbelievable shape," pointed out Davis, "He is down to 245 pounds, and his body fat content is only 5.14 percent. He has made great progress after his injuries, and is looking for a great senior season."

Hudson's return allows Yates, a two-time All-Sun Belt performer, to return to his natural position.

Haddock, who closed last season as perhaps the Blue Raiders best player, will not participate this weekend because of a sprained MCL that Davis termed "not serious".

Freshman guard [David Murray](#) will also miss the two public practice sessions, with his ankle in a boot brace.

Davis said that the Raiders are holding another open practice session for interested fans on the morning of Saturday, October 24, before the football game with Western Kentucky.

Middle Tennessee will play an exhibition game with North Alabama at 8 p.m. on Nov. 9 before opening regular season action by playing host to King College at 7 p.m. on Nov. 13.



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