

October 16, 2009

## Blue Raiders set to host SEC's Bulldogs

Nationally televised game kicks off at 11:30 AM

*Athletic Communications*

**MURFREESBORO, Tenn.** - It is common practice for fans of athletic teams to circle one game on the schedule each year as the game they most want to win.

For Middle Tennessee fans this year, that game is Saturday when the Blue Raiders host Mississippi State in Floyd Stadium at 11:30 a.m. The game will be televised nationally on ESPNU.

Middle Tennessee is no stranger to Mississippi State, or to the SEC for that matter. In games against the Big Six BCS conferences, Middle Tennessee has played SEC foes more than any other. In fact, the Blue Raiders have played every SEC team except Auburn at least once.

Both Mississippi State and Vanderbilt have played Middle Tennessee three times each, with MSU winning all three and Vandy losing all three. The Bulldogs won 31-22 at Starkville last year, overcoming a 16-14 Blue Raider lead in the third quarter.

However, all previous encounters with the SEC have been on the road, and this one will be at home for the Blue Raiders. And that makes a difference, especially after playing three consecutive road games.

"It's like going home and seeing your family. We have all of our people here," said senior defensive tackle [Brandon Perry](#). "It will be good to get back playing in our house because it has been a while."

Coach Rick Stockstill believes his team can bounce back from a poor showing at Troy last week.

"We are a confident football team, and just need to go out and play a solid football game," Added Stockstill. "Defensively, we played well at times against Troy but on offense, nobody played well. We just have to get better, and I have no doubt that we will correct the mistakes that we made last week."

Mississippi State will present big challenges on both offense and defense. Offensively, the Bulldogs run the spread option, which is basically what Florida and Utah run. The centerpiece is senior running back Anthony Dixon, a 6-1, 235-pounder who scored two touchdowns against the Blue Raiders last year.

Defensively, Stockstill is impressed with the Bulldogs' line. "They are probably bigger than any defensive line we have faced so far. I know they will be the fastest defense we have played against up front."

Middle Tennessee will keep on doing what it has been doing all year, passing the ball all over the field in an up-tempo offense, and using sure tackling, lots of stunting, and forcing turnovers to stymie the Bulldog offense.

Saturday will also be a day of recognition for five former Blue Raider athletes who will be inducted into the Blue Raider Sports Hall of Fame at 9:00 a.m. It will be at the Kennon Hall of Fame, and the public is welcome.

Kickoff for Saturday's game is 11:32 am. In addition to the ESPNU telecast, it can be seen on ESPN360 over the internet. It can also be heard over the Blue Raider network, featuring Chip Walters and Kelly Holcomb. Affiliates are WMOT-FM 89.5 in Murfreesboro, WNSR 560 AM in Nashville, WGNS 1450 AM and 101.9 FM in Murfreesboro and 103.9 FM in Bowling Green, KY.



Chris McCoy and the Blue Raiders are set to take on the Bulldogs Saturday. ( )

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Printed on February 10, 2012

Original URL: <http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/41614>