

October 27, 2009

Blue Raiders picked third in East Yates picks up preseason First Team honors

MT Athletic Communications

NEW ORLEANS - Senior Desmond "Boogie" Yates has been named to the First Team All-Sun Belt Preseason team while Middle Tennessee was picked to finish third following a vote of the league's head coaches. The preseason poll and all-conference teams were released prior to the start of the Sun Belt's annual media days.

· Complete Sun Belt Preseason Poll and Teams

The preseason poll tabbed Middle Tennessee third after Western Kentucky, who received 12 of the 13 first place votes, and Troy.

South Alabama was selected fourth while Florida Atlantic and Florida International round out the East Division poll in fifth and sixth place, respectively.

"I think the four teams who were picked highest in the league are those with the most players back. Western Kentucky has five of their top six, Troy has six of their top seven, North Texas has everyone back and Denver has 80 to 90 percent of their scoring back," head coach Kermit Davis said. "To show the balance of the league, seven teams received a first place vote so I think that indicates just how evenly matched the coaches think the league will be."

Yates is the only Blue Raider named to the preseason team after rounding out the 2008-09 season as a First Team selection. The Somerville, Tenn., native reached 1,000 points in his career as a junior while scoring 550 points during the season. Yates also had 145 total rebounds, 13 blocks and 20 steals during the 2008-09 campaign.

"I don't think it surprised anyone that Boogie was selected preseason first team. It is a really good first, second and third team and I'm sure we have some guys that have chances to make all-conference teams just like a ton of other players in our league do," Davis said. "There are a lot of good players. The one thing that stuck out to me last year is there were about five to seven players picked to a preseason team that did not make any team at the end of the year. I think the way other guys work around the league that could sure happen again."

In the West Division, North Texas was selected first, with nine first place votes, followed by Denver and Louisiana-Lafayette to round out the top three. Picked fourth in the west was Arkansas-Little Rock followed by Louisiana-Monroe and Arkansas State while New Orleans was seventh.

Middle Tennessee will play host to North Alabama in an exhibition game on Nov. 9 at 8 p.m. before officially opening the season with King College on Nov. 13 at 7 p.m.



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