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Blue Raiders shine in exhibition win

Newcomers guide team in win

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee's newcomers shined in its exhibition game against North Alabama on Monday night as it took a 99-60 win.

The Blue Raiders had five double-digit scorers in the game with three of those five joining the team for the 2009-10 season.

"It was one of the best played exhibition games we've had in seven years, especially with that many new guys. Every guy we put in made good effort and our energy level was good. To hold an exhibition opponent to 31 percent shooting is really good. North Alabama scored 80 points at Tennessee a week and a half ago, so it's capable offensively to do some things," head coach Kermit Davis said.

Freshman [J.T. Sulton](#) posted an impressive performance in his first game as a Blue Raider scoring 17 points in 19 minutes in addition to grabbing nine rebounds.

"Coach Davis actually told me by Boogie being out I have to step up and show I am tough enough to take that role. As a freshman, a lot of people don't get to show off their talent. He told me I have a lot of talent and need to showcase it," Sulton said.

Freshman [James Gallman](#) also performed well for the Blue Raiders in his first game as he scored 16 points in 22 minutes. Gallman was also 4 for 7 from behind the arc.

"We are capable, offensively, to do some things. I was extremely pleased. I thought some of our new guys played with a lot of confidence in this game. We have a long way to, but that was a good start. [James Gallman](#) is a good perimeter shooter," Davis said.

Senior [Montarrio Haddock](#) had the best game of the returning players as he put 25 points on the board and grabbed eight rebounds in 20 minutes of play. Senior [Calvin O'Neil](#) and junior [James Washington](#) rounded out the double-digit scorers with 10 points each.

Washington guided the offense throughout the night at the point as he had a team high six assists and four steals in 30 minutes of play.

The Blue Raiders made a 10-3 run to begin the second half holding the Lions to just three points in the first five minutes while taking a 62-38 lead.

At the halfway mark in the second half, Middle Tennessee led by 36, 79-43 then Washington hit a shot from behind the arc making it 82-46. The two teams battled to begin the game with neither having more than a three-point advantage. Then two quick shots by Haddock put the Blue Raiders up 22-19 at the 10-minute mark.

Middle Tennessee continued to perform well and a jumper by Gallman extended the lead to seven-points at the eight-minute media timeout. Then a three-pointer by Sulton put the Blue Raiders up by 11, 36-25 with 6:30 left in the half.

Haddock hit a 3-pointer at buzzer to put Middle Tennessee up 52-35 at the half. Haddock ended the first half with 13 points while Sulton led the team with 15 points. Gallman added 10-points of his own as the third player in double-digit figures in the first half.

The Blue Raiders shot 70 percent from behind the arc in the first half while going 20 for 37 for a 54.1 field goal percentage.

Middle Tennessee will open regular season action on Friday, Nov. 13 when it plays host to King College. Tipoff is set for 7 p.m. at Murphy Center.

Postgame Quotes Head Coach Kermit Davis On Boogie's absence being a positive thing pending a healthy return "I'm not saying we won't get nicked up on some away games that Boogie would potentially help us win. But if Boogie comes back healthy and if this team can stay healthy, there is no question the number of minutes these other guys can get will help us a bunch."



Freshman James Gallman performed well for the Blue Raiders in his first game as he scored 16 points in 22 minutes of action. (Bradley Lambert)

[James Washington](#) **On the new guys coming together** "It's not just on the court, but off of the court as well. For the most part, we all stay together. On the weekends and throughout the day we are spending time with each other and becoming a close family. That's what a team is really about."

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