Blue Raiders continue November to Remember

Dasher throws four TDs as Middle Tennessee improves to 8-3

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - It was "Senior Day" at Middle Tennessee but a standout underclassman continued to steal headlines on the field as the Blue Raiders capped the home portion of their schedule with an emphatic 38-14 win against visiting Arkansas State in front of 19,111 at Floyd Stadium Saturday.

Junior quarterback Dwight Dasher threw touchdowns to four different players to lead a Blue Raider offense that piled up 427 yards and dominated the Red Wolves from the opening quarter. Dasher finished with 263 yards and the four touchdowns to lead Middle Tennessee to its eighth win - tied for the most wins since the 2001 campaign.

The Blue Raiders also secured their fifth win at Floyd Stadium, representing the most home wins since Middle Tennessee was 5-0 at home in 2001. The fans enjoyed this one from the outset as the Blue Raiders (8-3) stormed to a 17-0 lead in the first quarter and never relented.

Dasher threw two touchdowns in the opening quarter to ignite the offensive avalanche. His third touchdown - a 32-yard strike to Harold Turner was his 18th of the season and allowed him to surpass Wes Counts (17) for the second most in a season. His fourth touchdown, a 7-yard pass to Garrett Andrews gave him 19 for the season and pulled him to within two of tying Mickey Corwin's

mark of 21, set in 1984. Dasher's four touchdowns were also the third-most in a game all-time.

With his 263 yards against Arkansas State, Dasher surpassed the 200-mark for the eighth time this season. The Blue Raiders are 8-2 all-time when Dasher achieves the feat. He started the scoring when he found running back D.D. Kyles for an 80-yard screen pass for a touchdown. Lineman Mark Fisher sprung the play with a big block.

Dasher came back with a touchdown pass to Chris McClover, one of 15 seniors playing their final home game, and Alan Gendreau added a 39-yard field goal in between as the Blue Raiders raced to a 17-0 lead.

It wasn't all offense. Middle Tennessee's unrelenting defense continued to dominate and got into the scoring act as well. The defense yielded just 220 yards and scored when Jamari Lattimore picked up a fumble and latereled it to Jeremy Kellem who scored to give the Blue Raiders a commanding lead. Marcus Udell also collected his seventh interception of the season to key a stop squad that was never really threatened.

Middle Tennessee, hopeful of a second bowl in Head Coach Rick Stockstill's fourth season, will conclude the regular season seeking nine wins at Louisiana-Monroe next Saturday.

POSTGAME NOTES:
8 IS GREAT: With the win today over Arkansas State, Middle Tennessee ran its record to 8-3 on the season and reached the 8-win total for just the second time in the last 15 years. The only other time during that stretch the Blue Raiders had 8 regular season wins was in 2001 when MT finished 8-3 and were co-champs of the SBC.

STRONG AT HOME: Middle Tennessee finished its 2009 home slate with a 5-1 record, including a perfect 4-0 mark in conference games. Over the last two years, the Blue Raiders have a mark of 9-2 at home and have won seven straight against SBC competition. The five home wins in 2009 are the most by the Blue Raiders since they went 5-0 at Floyd Stadium in 2001.

LONG PITCH AND CATCH: Middle Tennessee's first touchdown of the afternoon against Arkansas State was an 80-yard pass from Dwight Dasher to D.D. Kyles. It went down as career longs for both players and equaled the fifth longest reception in school history with Clint Marks' pass to Kerry Wright also against ASU in 2004. It also went down as the longest play from scrimmage for the Blue Raiders under Rick Stockstill.

GENDREAU TIES RECORD: With his 39-yard field goal in the first quarter, sophomore Alan Gendreau tied the school record for three-pointers in a season. The make was his 17th of the season to tie Matt Crews' mark set in 1990.

DASHER PASSES COUNTS: Junior Dwight Dasher tossed four touchdown passes against Arkansas State to run his season total to a career-best 19. That figure surpasses Wes Counts' mark of 17 for the second most in a season and leaves him just two shy of equaling the school record of 21 set by Mickey Corwin in 1984. Dasher's four touchdown passes also equal the third-most in a game behind the all-time record of six by Wes Counts against Idaho in 2001.

ANOTHER BLOCK: Middle Tennessee recorded its eighth blocked kick of the year when Brandon Perry rejected an ASU field goal in the second quarter. It was Perry's first career block and the team's fifth blocked field goal of the season. Under Rick Stockstill, the Blue Raiders now have 14

blocks in 48 games (7 FGs, 6 punts, 1 PAT) and the Blue Raiders have recorded 34 blocks in the FBS era in 127 total games (14 FGs, 12 punts, 8 PATs).

DASHER OVER 200: Junior Dwight Dasher went over the 200-yard passing mark for the eighth time this season and the second game in a row with 263 yards against Arkansas State. Dasher has now gone over the 200-yard barrier 10 times in his career to rank sixth all-time. The record of 18 games is held by Wes Counts and Clint Marks. When Dasher tops the 200-yard mark the Blue Raiders are 8-2.

HONEYCUTT PASSES MOSTILLER, OWENBY: With two receptions against Arkansas State, senior Patrick Honeycutt ran his career total to 111 allowing him to pass Demetric Mostiller (110) and Herbert Owenby (110) for fourth place on the all-time receptions list. Honeycutt will not catch Kerry Wright for third place as he owns 167 career catches.

30 IS KEY: Under Rick Stockstill, the Blue Raiders are virtually a lock for victory if they put up 30 points or more. MT is now 17-1 under Stockstill when scoring 30 points, including a perfect 7-0 this season. The lone loss came at Louisville in 2007 when the Blue Raiders fell, 58-42.

DEFENSIVE SCORE: Middle Tennessee recorded its third defensive touchdown of the season when Jamari Lattimore scooped up a fumble and pitched back to Jeremy Kellem who took it 11 yards for the score. The other two defensive scores this season have come from Chris McCoy and Lattimore. Under Rick Stockstill, the Blue Raiders have now recorded eight defensive touchdowns.

UDELL GETS 7TH: Senior Marcus Udell registered his team and conference leading seventh interception of the season in the win over Arkansas State. Udell has six of his seven picks in the last five games and is now just one shy of the school record of eight set by James Griffin in 1982.

QUICK HITTERS: In the key month of November, Middle Tennessee has now won six straight games dating back to last season (last loss was at Troy on Nov. 20, 2007 which was termed Black Tuesday) ... MT ran its conference record to 6-1 and the six wins matches the most SBC wins in school history with the 2006 team ... Senior Mark Thompson played in his 48th career game today against ASU to set a new FBS record at MT in games played in a season breaking the previous mark of 47 by Trevor Jenkins ... Dwight Dasher is now 12-4 all-time as the starter at quarterback ... The secondary of Alex Suber, Kevin Brown, Rod Issac, and Jeremy Kellem made their 16th straight start as a unit today against ASU ... Middle Tennessee recorded its sixth scoring drive of 90 or more yards under Rick Stockstill when it went 91 yards on nine plays in the third quarter against ASU (MT has three of the six this season) ... MT went over 400 yards of total offense for the seventh time this season.

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