

# Blue Raiders eye FBS record 9th win at ULM

## Game will air on CSS locally

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**MURFREESBORO, Tenn.** - In a season that has already exceeded the expectations of most observers, Middle Tennessee will travel to UL-Monroe on Saturday to try to cap the regular season with an FBS-era record ninth win and a six-game win streak.

The Blue Raiders (8-3, 6-1) will take on the Warhawks (6-5, 5-2) in a game that will have bowl ramifications for both teams. Kickoff will be at 3:34 pm, with the game being televised live on CSS (Ch 27 locally), airing at 3:30. It will also be available online at ESPN360.com.

A ninth win would place Middle Tennessee on a plateau not previously reached in the FBS era, representing the most wins in a season since the 1992 Blue Raiders were 10-3, and went two rounds deep into the 1-AA playoffs.

Middle Tennessee and ULM are already bowl-eligible with the required six wins, but a victory would enhance the chances of either team. The Warhawks need a seventh win to separate themselves from the teams that have won only six games. Blue Raider head coach Rick Stockstill knows that will likely give ULM motivation, but says it won't affect how the Raiders approach the game.

"We have no control over what Monroe thinks or how they play. Unless BCS schools do not fill up their bowl slots, you have to get seven wins. We knew that if we finished 6-6, we'd be sitting here at Christmas," said Stockstill.



"We know we will get their best shot, no matter what their record is. It is the last game of the season in a very competitive conference."

During the Blue Raiders current five-game win streak, every facet of the team has played well.

Offensively, Middle Tennessee is averaging 41.8 points per game, 499 yards of total offense (251.8 passing, 247.2 rushing) per game and has racked up 101 first downs during the win streak.

Defensively, the Blue Raiders have been just as dominant, yielding only 19.2 points per game, recording 22 sacks, seven forced fumbles, six blocked kicks and 49 tackles for loss. Middle Tennessee has also intercepted eight passes, and has scored on a blocked punt, a recovered fumble and an intercepted pass during the five-game span.

"I have to give our players a lot of credit. We continued to work and got better each week," said Stockstill. "I told our players that it is hard for teams to match our intensity. They may stay close, but they cannot stay with us. Teams think they are close, but we keep pounding and pounding, and break their will.

"Nobody that coaches a team can be more proud of a team than the way I am of this team, and the way they play," noted Stockstill.

Offensively, junior QB Dwight Dasher pulls the trigger on Middle Tennessee's balanced, high-powered offense. He is fifth nationally in total offense (3,376 yards), and has set school records in total offense, total plays and rushing yardage by a quarterback. He has passed for 19 touchdowns and rushed for nine more.

Dasher is poised to join a very elite group of six quarterbacks in NCAA history that have passed for 2,000 yards and rushed for 1,000 yards in a single season. He needs 135 yards rushing to reach the magic number of 1,000 this season.

Dasher has to have someone to throw the ball to, and Middle Tennessee has a bevy of good receivers. Seventeen Blue Raiders have caught passes, led by seniors Patrick Honeycutt with 32 and Chris McClover with 31. Junior Garrett Andrews has caught 30. Ten different receivers have caught touchdown passes this season.

Sophomore D.D. Kyles has been a big part of the offense in the win streak, with 570 yards rushing and two touchdowns. He also caught a Dasher screen pass on the second play of the Arkansas State game last week, and took it 80 yards for a score.

Sophomore place kicker Alan Gendreau has continued his accurate kicking for Middle Tennessee. His eight points last week against Arkansas State gave him a school record 90 points for a kicker in a single season. He has made 17-19 attempts this season.

Defensively, the Blue Raiders have been led by a stellar group of seniors, end Chris McCoy, tackle Brandon Perry, linebackers Danny Carmichael and Cam Robinson, and cornerbacks Alex Suber and Marcus Udell.

McCoy leads the Sun Belt Conference, and is ranked 7th nationally in tackles-for-loss with 17.5. He also has six sacks, three hurries and three pass break-ups, and returned a fumble 68 yards for a

score against Clemson.

Robinson (94) and Carmichael (77) lead the Raiders in tackles. Both have 11 tackles for loss, and five sacks. Carmichael is second nationally in forced fumbles with six.

Suber is perhaps the SBC's premier shut-down corner. He has no interceptions because most teams throw away from him, but his fellow corner, Udell, is 3rd in the nation in interceptions with seven.

Saturday's game can also be heard on the Blue Raider network featuring Chip Walters and Kelly Holcomb. Affiliates are WGNS 1450AM, FM101.5 and WMOT 89.5 FM in Murfreesboro, WNSR 560 in Nashville, and FM 103.9 in Bowling Green, KY.

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