Blue Raiders hold first New Orleans practice

17 period workout conducted indoors

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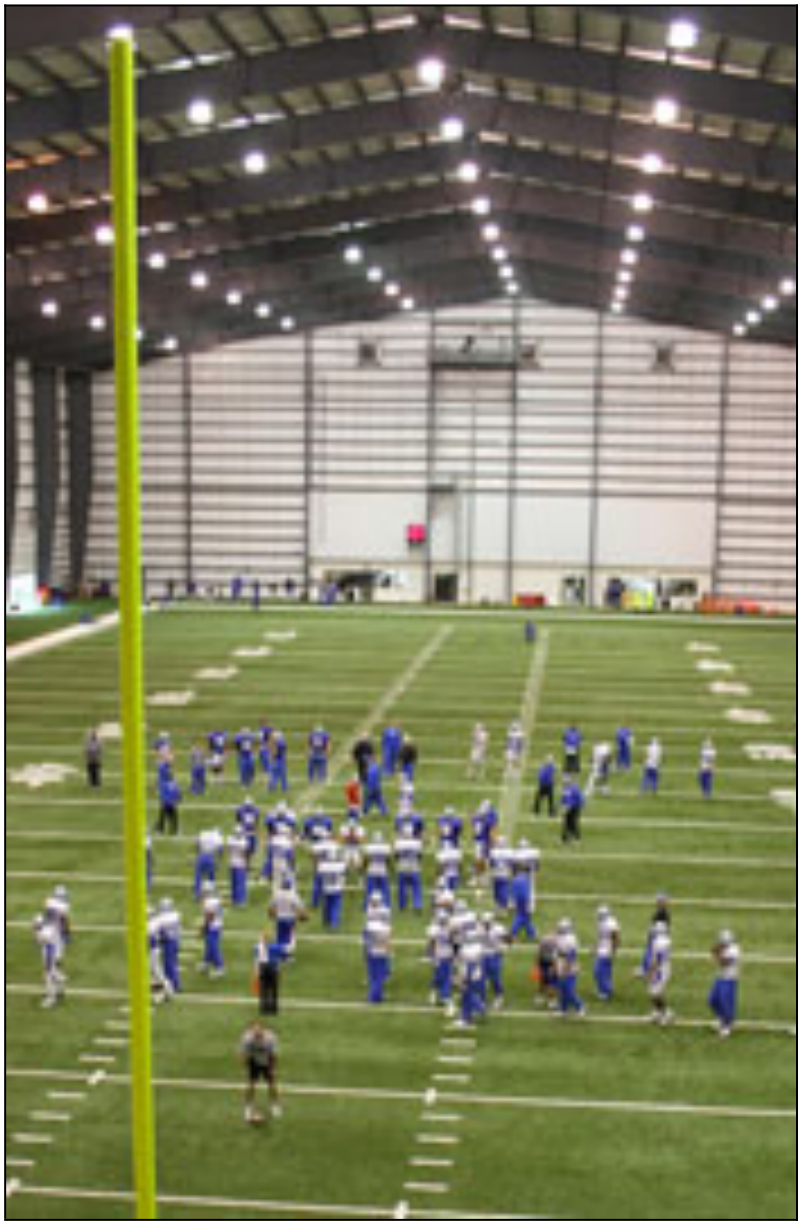

Middle Tennessee held its first practice in the Big Easy on Thursday. Due to rainy conditions, the Blue Raiders practiced inside the New Orleans Saints facility for just under two hours. The team will practice again on Friday before making their first visit to the Superdome on Saturday.

- **Photos:** Thursday Practice Gallery

QUOTES FROM TODAY'S BOWL PRACTICE

Jeremy Kellem on playing on National TV: We have a chance to gain a lot of respect for the program. We will be the only college game on that night and we just want to go out and show what Middle Tennessee football is all about. We are on the up and up; trying to get to the next level and this is just the next step to get us there.

Patrick Honeycutt on the New Orleans Bowl: It is a good experience for us to get to participate in something like this. We are down here to take care of business. It is a game, a business trip and we are here to have fun but we are also here to win. I can't wait for Sunday.

Patrick Honeycutt on missing the 2006 Motor City Bowl: Yes, but at the same time you just kind of look at it as another game. You don't look at it as a bowl but just another game on the schedule and you just have to go out and play.

Patrick Honeycutt on Southern Miss disguising their defense: Either way, week in and week out it's our stuff and it's about us. Our motto this year has been to just worry about us regardless of what they do on defense. We are going to run our stuff and execute our plays.

Alan Gendreau about kicking indoors and the surface: The surface is a lot like our field so I shouldn't have too much of a problem. Every surface that is artificial is always a little bit different. Kicking indoors doesn't make that much of a difference but on grass you have to adjust a little if it is wet or muddy or something like that because you don't want to slip. I have never kicked indoors and I am excited about there being no wind. It will be nice not to worry about wind.

Danny Carmichael on playing on National TV: We have played on TV a lot the last few years. It is not a big deal to us. It is just a great opportunity for people to see we are a pretty good football team and can compete with Conference USA. I think it is a great opportunity for us.

Danny Carmichael on team goals: It is our goal every year to go to a bowl. We set goals before the season starts that we want to win the conference and go to a bowl game. This year we got one out of two and now we need to accomplish the next goal and get a bowl win.

Mark Thompson on preparing for the Golden Eagles: We really have to break down what their tendencies are. We even look at film from last year to see their tendencies over a longer period of time. Luckily this game comes at the end of the season where we have at least 12 games to go over what they have been doing. We have gone through a lot of film study to really prepare for what they have done all year.

Head coach Rick Stockstill:

On Southern Miss Offense
They have a good offensive team and are very explosive. They have some very dynamic players on the offensive side of the ball. Their receiver, in my opinion, is a guy that can play anywhere in the country and the running back is a very physical runner in addition to having great speed. They have a veteran senior oriented offensive line and their quarterback has done a great job protecting the ball. We will have our hands full with them.

Larry Fedora and spread offense
I have known Larry for a good while and he is a good football coach. When I got to Middle Tennessee in 2006 we slowly evolved to it from a personnel standpoint and have had the spread since I got here. When Tony (Franklin) came in it wasn't like we went from a t-back offense to the spread. We had been running it for three years so the transition was very smooth.

Playing an unfamiliar opponent
We played three unfamiliar opponents this year in Clemson, Mississippi State and Memphis so we won't do any more film than usual because everybody changes. We studied Louisiana-Monroe just as much as we did the previous year so I don't think we will do anything different. We are just doing our normal preparation.

Southern Miss disguising its defense pre-snap

I think anytime a defense is multiple in their coverages and can disguise well it makes it harder for your offensive players and your quarterback especially when you are in the gun. You get your pre-snap read in the gun and then you have to take your eyes off the defense to concentrate on the ball or the snap so you get it and you have to adjust. Dwight (Dasher), our receivers and offensive line have to go a good job in our pre-snap read and in their film study preparation for us to be successful.

Dictating tempo and being in the lead
That's what you like. I don't think we dictated the tempo in the Florida Atlantic or Maryland games. Those were come from behind wins and pretty close throughout the game. In any offense, you like to play in the lead because it is easier to call plays that way. We have had pretty good success doing that and I think each game for us is different.

Gendreau's first time kicking indoors
He had never kicked a last second field goal either. It is still turf; the same size goal posts and he ought to be good because he doesn't have to worry about the wind and all that stuff. I don't think it will be an issue at all.

Bowl Viewing/Listening Party at Fanatics: Fanatics Bar & Grill at the Doubletree Hotel in Murfreesboro will be the site for the official Blue Raider Network/New Orleans Bowl Listening and Viewing Party on Sunday night. Blue Raider Network programming, including the Bell Jewelers Countdown to Kickoff and Raider Wrap-Up Show, will originate from Fanatics beginning at 6:30 p.m. with Thom Abraham, Duane Hickey, and Dick Palmer. Kickoff between Middle Tennessee and Southern Miss is slated for 7:32 p.m. The Fanatics Pre-Game Party kicks off at 6 p.m. with New Orleans-style food and beverage specials including delicious Cajun Gumbo and Creole Crab Dip.

Women's Basketball Viewing Party: Fans can gather at the team hotel in New Orleans to view the MT/WKU women's basketball Sunday afternoon at 2pm. The viewing party will be held in the A/B/C meeting rooms at the New Orleans Marriott, 555 Canal Street.

Player Diary: On the Bowl Central page of GoBlueRaiders.com there will be a player video diary from each day of the New Orleans Bowl experience. The video is being handled by senior Phillip Tanner who will be giving fans an inside look at what the team is doing while in the Big Easy. The first video went up Wednesday night so make sure you check it each day.

Blue Raider Video Team on the Move: An essential part of moving the Blue Raider Football headquarters south to New Orleans requires moving all video equipment. Video is essential to the program because coach's use it to scout the opponent, show it to the players in meetings, while also filming each bowl practice. This is no simple task. It's much more than just bringing down a few computers and screens. Video Coordinator Andrew Rossetti and his staff of six students drove to the hotel Tuesday night into Wednesday morning so that they could have enough setup time to be ready for the team's arrival on Wednesday afternoon. Once the truck arrived early Wednesday morning Rossetti's staff unloaded their equipment and finished setup in less than 3 hours. Not impressed? Well consider some of the following projects completed in that time:
- Setup of a video office that includes, a 400lb video server linking all the coaches' laptops The office also includes 2 video input stations & 2 video stations for film editing

- Running over 2,000ft of ethernet cord to 8 meeting rooms along with using around 1,500ft of tape to secure the cords
- Setting up laptops, projecters and video screens in 8 meeting rooms and linking them to main server
- Sound checking the portable sound system used in the team room for highlight tapes

Bowl Tidbits: Rick Stockstill had a surprise visitor to practice on Thursday when George Hinshaw made an appearance. Hinshaw was Stockstill's offensive coordinator at Florida State ... New Orleans Saints running back Lynell Hamilton paid a visit to the Blue Raiders today and met Coach Stockstill ... Oh yeah, a guy by the name of Reggie Bush peaked in at practice today as well ... The Blue Raiders traveled about 25 minutes from the hotel to practice today at the New Orleans Saints facility ... Burton Burns, the running back coach at Alabama, also made an appearance at today's workout ... Head Football Athletic Trainer Robbie Stewart's father-in-law is New Orleans Saints radio play-by-play man Jim Henderson.

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