Blue Raiders defeat Privateers 63-58

Yates scores 18; Washington plays solid defense

December 31, 2009 · MT Athletic Communications

NEW ORLEANS - Junior James Washington's heads up defensive play late in the second half handed Middle Tennessee the ball and sealed a 63-58 win over New Orleans Thursday night in its Sun Belt Conference opener. New Orleans (5-9, 0-3) cut the Blue Raider lead to two points, 59-57 with 2:41 remaining and then a free throw by Ejike Hart cut it to one-point, 59-58 with 56 seconds left. Senior Desmond Yates hit a jumper with 30 seconds putting the Blue Raiders (6-6, 1-0) up by three, 61-58, then Washington forced a turnover and called a timeout to give the ball back to the Blue Raiders with 17.9 seconds. Middle Tennessee was fouled on the inbound after the timeout and two free throws by freshman James Gallman clinched the win. Yates ended the game with 18 points after scoring just two in the first half. The Somerville, Tenn., native ended the game 6 for 17 from the field with four free throws, two assists, a block and a steal. "I thought the team showed a great deal of character tonight. I thought for a period of time in the first half we played really quality basketball. Offensively and defensively in the second half was just toughness and gut check James Washington made a great loose ball save and we got good play from Desmond Yates in the second half," head coach Kermit Davis said. Middle Tennessee shot 44 percent from the field and 80 percent from the free throw line. The Blue Raider bench outscored New Orleans 33-4 with Washington and Gallman scoring 10 and 11 points respectively and freshman J. T. Sulton adding 12. I thought our true freshman were outstanding. Our bench outscored them 33-4 and we went with Demario over Washington but James was just so ready to play. Then we brought J.T. off the bench so that was good. It is a good feeling when your bench helps your team out that much," Davis said. Middle Tennessee began the game slowly scoring just one field goal in the first

five minutes of play but quickly turned things around. The team ended the first half on an 18-2 run for a nine-point lead, 37-28 at the break. Middle Tennessee took its first lead after a jumper by Sulton, 19-18 with 8:27 remaining. New Orleans then went on an 8-0 run to take a 26-19 lead but the Blue Raiders turned it around from there allowing the Privateers just one more basket. Washington and Sulton led all scorers with 10 points while Gallman was a perfect 3 for 3 from behind the arc for nine points at the half. Middle Tennessee maintained its lead in the second half after a basket by Yates kept it at 10, 45-35, with13:37 remaining. UNO cut the Blue Raider lead to three, 55-52, but a layup by Sulton put them back up by five, 57-52 with 5:13 left in the game. The Blue Raiders will be back in action on Saturday, Jan. 2 when they play host to UL-Lafayette at 7 p.m. in Murphy Center.

Printed on May 24, 2013
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/43119