

# Blue Raiders extend streak to four with 68-58 win

## Washington scores 23 points in second league win

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### MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Middle Tennessee used a late 10-0 run in the second half to propel it to a 68-58 win over Louisiana on Saturday night. The Blue Raiders (7-6, 2-0) trailed for much of the second half before a scoring surge behind freshman J.T. Sulton and junior James Washington put them ahead and never looked back. Washington led all scorers with 23 points in his second 20-point game on the season while Sulton was the only other player in double figures with 11. Washington was 5 for 10 from the field and 9 for 11 at the charity strip while Sulton connected on five of seven attempts. "James Washington really dominated the game from the point guard spot. For us to out-rebound that team by thirteen was great," head coach Kermit Davis said. "The second half was good quality of play for our team. We shot 60 percent and limited them to 36



percent. It was just a typical, good league game. This was one of those games that came down to the last five minutes." As a team, Middle Tennessee shot 46.7 percent from the field and made 21 of 29 free throw attempts. The Ragin' Cajuns (4-10, 1-2) shot 42 percent from the field with Chris Gradnigo leading all scorers with 23 points. The Blue Raiders outrebounded UL 37 to 24 with senior Calvin O'Neil grabbing a team high seven. Junior Trevor Ottley and senior Montarrío Haddock aided the defense with six rebounds each. With the win, the Blue Raiders extend their win streak to four games and are now 2-0 in Sun Belt Conference action. After a shot by Courtney Wallace, the Ragin' Cajuns extended their lead to four, 45-41, with 13 minutes remaining in the game. Middle Tennessee

continued to fight and with the score tied at 47, Sulton made a jumper to hand the Blue Raiders a 49-47 lead. The Blue Raiders continued to perform well going on a 10-0 run to pull ahead 53-47 with eight minutes remaining. A three-pointer by Washington put Middle Tennessee ahead by 10 points with 2:45 and another three-pointer by Haddock made it 67-54 in favor of the Blue Raiders with under two minutes to play. The two teams battled for the lead at the beginning of the game and two free throws by freshman James Gallman put the Blue Raiders ahead 14-9 with 12 minutes remaining. Then fighting for points once again Washington's three put Middle Tennessee ahead 29-26 with four minutes to play. Washington ended the half with 15 points after going 4 for 7 from the field. Middle Tennessee shot 36.4 percent in the first half and went 9 for 14 from the free throw line. The Ragin' Cajuns shot 45.2 percent in the first half taking a four-point lead, 33-29 into the break. Gradnigo connected on five of eight opportunities scoring 13 points. The Blue Raiders will be back in action on Monday, Jan. 4 when it travels to Nashville, Tenn., to face Vanderbilt. The game is scheduled for 8 p.m. and will be broadcast on Fox Sports South and online at ESPN360.com.

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