Blue Raiders take 69-64 win over Mean Green

Haddock leads four players in double figures

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Senior Calvin O'Neil guided Middle Tennessee throughout the night as the Blue Raiders defeated North Texas 69-64 on Saturday night. O'Neil ended the game with 13 points, after going 5-9 from the field, four rebounds, three assists, one block and two steals in 35 minutes of action. His pass to junior Rod Emanuel with 41 seconds to play put Middle Tennessee (13-10, 8-3) up by four and forced North Texas to start fouling to get the ball back. All total four players scored in double figures with senior Montarrio Haddock leading the way with 15 while Emanuel and senior Desmond Yates added 12 each. "Rod Emmanuel off the bench was just great. We beat a really tough, well-coached team tonight and it was a physical game. We really handled a lot of adversity and this was a good win for us," head coach Kermit Davis said. Freshman David Murray entered the game after Middle Tennessee got into foul trouble. In seven minutes Murray went 2-3 from the field and 3-4 at the charity stripe to score seven points in addition to two steals and a rebound. "I told myself just go out there, play basketball and don't get nervous. It's something you like doing, you've been playing your whole life so have fun with it. Just play ball," Murray said. "We talked about, going into the game that the bench would be the key. With David Murray, it just shows that you never know when your time gets called. He's been our most improved player over the past few weeks and came in and played with such confidence," Davis said. The Blue Raiders shot 46.2 percent from the field as North Texas (13-8, 6-

5) shot 37.5 percent but the defense was strong throughout the night. Middle Tennessee's bench outscored the Mean Green 24-15 and the Blue Raiders scored 21 points off turnovers. With the win, Middle Tennessee extended its win streak to five games and is tied for first-place in the East Division of the Sun Belt Conference with Florida Atlantic. As a team, Middle Tennessee had 33 rebounds with Haddock pulling down a team high eight while junior Trevor Ottley grabbed five of his own. The Blue Raiders also had six blocks and 11 steals on the night. Ottley block three shots while Emanuel had a team high three steals. Middle Tennessee used a 5-0 run to take a 13-6 lead at the 12 minute media timeout. The Blue Raiders kept rolling taking a 12-point lead, 22-10 after a three-pointer by Gallman. North Texas closed the gap to four, 28-24, with two minutes to play in the first half. O'Neil's three-point play gave the Blue Raiders a 35-31 lead at the half. Middle Tennessee shot 46.2 percent from the field in the first half led by O'Neil who posted 10 points. UNT shot 31.8 percent from the field as the Blue Raiders played good defense with 17 rebounds, five blocks and five steals. Ottley had three of Middle Tennessee's five blocks in the first half while Sulton had two steals. The two teams traded points to begin the second half with Middle Tennessee maintaining a two point lead. A three point play by Ottley put the Blue Raiders up by four, 42-38 with 13:31 to play in the game. A three-pointer by the Mean Green's Shorter cut the Blue Raider lead to two, 66-64, but Emanuel dunked a ball after a pass from O'Neil extending it to four, 68-64, with 41 seconds on the clock. Middle Tennessee wraps up its three-game home stand on Feb. 4 when it plays host to Troy at 7 p.m.

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