

# Blue Raiders battle to the end against Troy

## Gallman guides team late

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### **MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -**

Middle Tennessee erased a six-point lead inside four minutes but could not overcome the Trojans in a 70-67 loss on Thursday night. Freshman James Gallman hit two key three-pointers in the final four minutes of the game to keep the Blue Raiders within three points, 65-62. Then a free throw by junior Trevor Ottley with 20 seconds to play made it a one point game, 68-67. Middle Tennessee (13-11, 8-4) had three fouls called before it reached the bonus as Troy' shot just two free throws which ended up being the winning shots. Senior Desmond Yates took the Blue Raiders' final shot with four seconds to play as Troy (13-10, 8-4) took the win and snapped MT's five-game win streak. After tonight's game, Middle Tennessee, Florida Atlantic and Troy are now in a three-way tie for first place in the East Division of the Sun Belt



Conference. "We set up the final play for Gallman, couldn't make it work, looked to Montarrío, and finally to Boogie," head coach Kermit Davis said. "I told our team that the worst we'd be is one game out, but FAU lost, so we are tied with them and Troy for the lead." Gallman ended the game with 14 points after going 3-8 from behind the arc and 5-11 from the field. Junior James Washington led all scorers with 15 points as he was 4-9 from the field and 5-6 at the free throw line. Senior Montarrío Haddock added 10 points of his own which included going 2-3 from the three-point line. The Blue Raiders shot 46.2 percent from the field and 63.2 percent at the charity stripe making 12 of their 19 attempts. "In our five-game winning streak, we were holding teams to about 60 points and about 37%, and tonight they shot 47% and that's unacceptable," Davis said. "We had our chances, great

looks down the stretch. Trevor shoots a free throw to tie while Gallman and Boogie had great looks there at the end." Middle Tennessee pulled down 33 rebounds as a team led by freshman JT Sulton who posted his first double figure rebounding game with 11. Ottley added six rebounds of his own while scoring eight points. Troy jumped out to a 5-0 lead to begin the game and quickly pulled ahead by 10 points, 21-11 with 10 minutes to play in the half. The Blue Raiders kept battling and cut Troy's lead to five with a minute to play, 37-32. Washington led all scorers with 14 points as Middle Tennessee shot 42.3 percent from the field in the first half. Sulton led the defense under the basket pulling down five rebounds as the team had 15 total. Blue Raiders came back strong from the half and a shot by Yates kept them within six points, 49-43, with 13 minutes on the clock. Middle Tennessee continued to keep it close trailing by just five, 59-54 after a dunk by Sulton. O'Neil hit layup after a rebound by Sulton cutting the Trojan lead to three, 59-56. Haddock hit a three-pointer with 2:19 left in the game to tie the game at 65. With 22.2 seconds on the clock, Washington hit a free throw to cut the lead to two and Ottley rebounded the ball and was fouled on the second shot. At the line, Ottley made one of his free throws to make it a one-point game, 68-67 with 20 seconds remaining. The Blue Raiders will be back in action on Saturday, Jan. 6 at South Alabama in Mobile, Ala. The game will be broadcast on CSS as the Sun Belt Game of the Week with tip-off set for 1 p.m. "We need to bounce back, have a good practice tomorrow and be ready to play on Saturday. We've been a good road team and have a lot of confidence on the road. At this point we are the best road team in our league," Davis said.

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