Middle Tennessee slays Jags 80-68

Washington leads all scorers with 18

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MOBILE, Ala. - Middle Tennessee had four players score in double figures as it used two big scoring runs to its advantage to take an 80-68 win over South Alabama on Saturday. Junior James Washington led all scorers with 18 points while seniors Desmond Yates and Montarrio Haddock added 16 and 13 respectively. Freshman James Gallman scored 11 after going 4-7 from the field. Washington went 4-9 from behind the arc and made all six of his free throws to guide the Blue Raider offense. "After a tough loss to Troy, a quick turnaround with a 1 p.m. game and get down 22-6 against a good South Alabama team I thought the resiliency and toughness of our team really showed. James Washington's floor leadership was tremendous and Boogie and Calvin really responded. Other than Washington, I really think Trevor Ottley was really the player of the game defensively and made all of his free throws," head coach Kermit Davis said. The Blue Raiders (14-11, 9-4) shot 46.9 percent from the field and missed just four of their 30 free throws. South Alabama (13-12, 5-8) shot 44.6 percent from the field with four scoring in double figures led by Tim Williams with 17. Defensively, Middle Tennessee had 25 rebounds, 10 less than the Jags, with junior Trevor Ottley pulling down a team high six. South Alabama had 15 turnovers in the game which the Blue Raiders' used to their advantage scoring 23 points. Ottley also had two blocks and a steal to guide the defense. South Alabama hit two quick three pointers to begin play and never looked back taking a 10-point lead, 12-2, at the first media timeout. Middle Tennessee kept the Jag lead within ten, 22-11, at the 11-minute mark. The Blue Raiders turned it up a notch on defense and after going on a 10-0 run cut the USA lead to three, 24-21. Middle Tennessee

continued the impressive run making it 23-9 to end the half for a 34-33 lead. Sulton gave Middle Tennessee its first lead of the game 30-29 with 1:40 to play. Middle Tennessee shot 39.1 percent from the field in the first half with Washington leading all scorers with eight points while Yates added seven. The Blue Raiders were 13-14 at the free throw line which helped them during the big run. The two teams traded points to begin the second half but the Jags then went on an 18-10 run to pull ahead by seven, 58-51. The Blue Raiders did not let up and after two free throws by Ottley tied the game at 63. Then a three-pointer by Yates gave them the lead, 66-63 with 6:35 to play. Middle Tennessee extended its lead to seven, 70-63, after going on a 9-0 run with under four minutes remaining in the game. The Blue Raiders return to Murphy Center next week playing host to Denver on Thursday, Feb. 11 and Houston Baptist on Saturday, Feb. 13. Both games are set to tip-off at 7 p.m.

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