# Haddock, Blue Raiders preparing for Denver

## Senior guides team on both sides of ball

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**MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -** Middle Tennessee has had a number of key components come into place as it sits atop the Sun Belt East Division heading into the last five conference games of the season. Solid defense, clutch shooting and different players rising to the occasion have all been a part of the Blue Raiders success as they have posted a 6-1 record over their last seven games. Steady performances have also aided the Blue Raiders in their success as is the case with senior Montarrio Haddock. The Greenville, N.C., native has posted double figure scoring efforts in 11 consecutive games and is currently averaging 12.6 points per game during the current 6-1 stretch. "I try to be a good leader on the floor between Boogie, B.J., Calvin and me. We all try to encourage each other to keep playing hard even when things go bad in a game. We try to play together as a family and get things going," Haddock said. In conference play, Haddock ranks 12th in scoring, averaging 13.9 points per game, and eighth in rebounding with 7.2 per contest. He is first on the team in rebounds (81) and second in total points (166) in league action. This season, Haddock has 19 games where he has scored 10 or more points which includes four 20-point performances. He has the only two double-doubles recorded by the Blue Raiders this season and has been the leading scorer six times. Haddock has had eight or more rebounds and scored in double figures 10 times this season. He has been the leading rebounder for the Blue Raiders 13 times, including five of the last seven games. Against Western Kentucky and ULM he had eight rebounds and 10 or more points which aided the Blue Raider leadership and resulted in wins. Currently, Haddock leads the Blue Raiders in six statistical categories including all four rebound categories. "Any little thing will get me going, like getting a steal and giving it to my teammate or getting a big offensive rebound and giving it to my teammate. When I rebound the ball better I play

better," Haddock said. "It makes the difference between 13 points and 18 points. Against Denver and in other games coming up, I'm going to try to get double figures in rebounding." Haddock along with the rest of the team leaders, seniors Calvin O'Neil, Desmond Yates and juniors James Washington and Trevor Ottley will look to play solid defense against Denver on Thursday night. Middle Tennessee's opponents have grabbed more rebounds in the last six games but the Blue Raiders have posted a 5-1 record. While opponents have 28 more rebounds during that span, Middle Tennessee has 19 more steals and one more block. "We need to keep them below 38 percent shooting. That's our goal. We adjusted the defense a little bit because they backdoor a lot. We want to just stay below the ball and be there to make steals. Denver runs in transition and their defense likes to match up zone. We should get more post touches between Boogie, J.T., and me," Haddock said. Tip-off with Denver is set for 7 p.m. in Murphy Center and will be the first of a two-game homestand.

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