

Washington sets records in 109-79 pounding

Blue Raiders tie record for three-pointers in a game

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Junior James Washington's record performance and Middle Tennessee's hot shooting guided the team to a 109-79 win over Houston Baptist on Saturday night. Washington went 10-17 from behind the arc, and the game, as he broke the school record for three-pointers in a game. The Saint Louis, Mo., native ended the game with 34 points and eight assists. With his 10 treys, Washington surpassed Robert "Cat-Eye" Taylor and John Humphrey, who had hit eight in three different games, to break the record.

It was the first time since 1994 that a Blue Raider scored 33 or more points. Washington is the only Blue Raider under the Kermit Davis era to do so. The last Middle Tennessee player was Milton Dean who scored 41 against South East Missouri on Jan. 14, 1994.

"It was a big game because

we won, first of all. We just have so much momentum going into this last stretch before the tournament," Washington said. "We owe it to our practices because Coach makes our practices so competitive and puts us in game situations. We come out ready to play every game now."

As a team, the Blue Raiders (16-11) made 15 three-pointers which tied the school record set on Feb. 3, 2000 against Eastern Kentucky. Senior Matt Joines hit the record tying trey with 1:19 remaining in the game. The Blue Raiders were 15-33 from behind the arc which also tied the most attempted in a game, which has happened twice before (1/18/97; 12/12/00).

Three Blue Raiders scored in double figures in addition to Washington and were led by senior Desmond Yates, who recorded his fourth 20-point game this season. When Yates scores 20 points or more the Blue Raiders are 22-8. Freshmen J. T. Sulton and James Gallman added 12 points each.



"It was a good non-conference win. We kept our momentum going and now we've won eight of our last nine. It's good that we played against an all-zone team because we'll see all-zone Thursday night at Troy," Davis said. "This is a big confidence builder for our team. It was a fantastic performance by James Washington. Our team played very unselfish tonight and it's going to be a fun next two weeks."

Yates aided the defense grabbing six rebounds and five steals as the Blue Raiders had 29 rebounds on the night. Senior Calvin O'Neil pulled down five rebounds while sophomore Demario Williams had four.

Middle Tennessee had a season high 15 steals in the game while Houston Baptist (6-18) committed 30 turnovers, which the Blue Raiders turned into 36 points. The Blue Raiders shot 56.8 percent from the field as a team and two players had nine or more field goals individually.

For the first time since the 2001-02 season opener the Blue Raiders scored 100 points in a game. The last a Middle Tennessee team to passed the 100 point mark was on Nov. 17, 2001 against Bryan College.

Middle Tennessee came out strong in the second half pulling ahead by 22, 75-56, with 11:32 on the clock. The Blue Raiders did not let up and in the final minutes when the starters were replaced kept the scoring going.

All total the bench scored 35 points with Gallman and junior Rod Emanuel leading the way. Bench players scored Middle Tennessee's last 20 points as it went on a 20-8 run to end the game.

In the first half, a three-point play by Sulston put the Blue Raiders up by six, 26-20, with 9:57 to play and the Blue Raiders never looked back. The Blue Raiders extended their lead to 14-points, 41-27, after a jumper by Emanuel with five minutes on the clock.

Middle Tennessee shot 59.5 percent in the first half, led by Yates who went 6-8 with 14 points while Washington added 13 of his own.

The Blue Raiders return to Sun Belt conference action next week when they travel to Troy. Tipoff is set for 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 18. Middle Tennessee will honor its seniors in its final home game against South Alabama on Saturday, Feb. 20 at 7 p.m.

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