

# Pro Day huge success for Blue Raiders

## Record number 22 NFL teams on hand

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

More than two dozen professional football scouts were on hand at Middle Tennessee to watch the outgoing seniors work out at the annual Pro Day on Thursday. It was by far the most in Blue Raider history, and is another indicator of the growth of the Middle Tennessee football program.



"The main thing is that it shows that we have some good players. Scouts are coming and they don't have to come," said Blue Raider head coach Rick Stockstill. "I tell our players all the time that you have to give them a reason to come. What they see on tape and at games and fall practices, you have to give them a reason to come.

"We have good players scouts want to come and evaluate, and that shows the growth and maturity of our program. Each year we have progressed more. The scouts know when they come here that our players are going to be first class, fun to work out and deal with, and our coaches will cooperate and give them everything they need. They know this is a first class program they are coming to."

Twenty-two NFL teams were represented in the drills which included speed, quickness, agility and athleticism. Also on hand were three scouts from the National Arena Football League's Nashville Storm and one from the Winnipeg Blue Bombers of the Canadian Football League. Four agents were also interested bystanders.

The NFL teams on hand were the Ravens, Colts, Saints, Redskins, Cowboys, Seahawks, 49ers, Cardinals, Falcons, Buccaneers, Eagles, Texans, Chiefs, Titans, Bears, Browns, Vikings, Jets, Dolphins, Steelers, Giants, and Patriots.

Mike Ackerley of the Tennessee Titans was one of the NFL scouts on hand, and explained how the process worked.

"We have an idea of what to expect from watching tape and evaluating them during the year, and we also watch them play. We watched Middle play two or three times last year," said Ackerley. "We have a little bit of an idea of the guys we are interested in, and this is just a confirmation of what we, hopefully, already know."

Ackerley noted that, at this point in the year, all of the scouts basically work on their own, although they do work together in running the drills.

"We work together in splitting the groups up, and we also share times and that sort of thing. It goes faster and smoother for the players as well. But basically, you are still working on your own, because you have certain things that you are looking for."

How do they decide who to look at?

"Typically, when we go to a school, we work out all of the players that a coach recommends, or think that they might have a chance to go on to the NFL," said Ackerley. "If we wanted to come in and look at just the players that we want, we'd just look at them, but we try to help the colleges by taking a look at some others and giving them an opportunity."

"And you never know. You just might find someone with size and speed that you could develop, and you go back and look at tape on them, and then decide if you want to invite them to camp."

Dash and agility times varied according to position. Times for the 40-yard dash were also recorded at the ten and twenty yard lines to measure acceleration. "L" drills, 60-yard shuttles and Pro shuttles were included. In the weight room, both vertical jumps and 225-lb reps were recorded.

Perhaps the most impressive were LB Danny Carmichael, CB Alex Suber, WR Patrick Honeycutt and DE Chris McCoy.

In the weight room, Honeycutt and Suber had the two best vertical jumps at 42" and 39 inches, respectively. LB Cam Robinson was third with 37".

In the 225-lb reps, Carmichael lifted the bar 24 times, followed by McCoy with 23 and DT Brandon Perry with 22.

The sprints and agility drills were held on Horace Jones Field. In the 40-yard dash, Suber and WR Desmond Gee tied for the quickest time at 4.53. WR Chris McClover was third at 4.57, with cornerback Marcus Udell clocking in at 4.59

For acceleration, Carmichael and Udell tied at 1.59 seconds for ten yards, while McClover led the 20-yard dash at 2.61 seconds, followed by Suber and Honeycutt at 2.62.

Carmichael blew away the field in the Pro Shuttle, with a time of 4.09 seconds. Honeycutt was second at 4.15, and Carmichael's second attempt was 3rd fastest at 4.19. . Honeycutt noted that he, Suber, Carmichael and Michael Cannon had been training hard under the watchful eye of Jason Spray.

"Today was test day, and we came to show the scouts what we could do," said Honeycutt. "Last night we were all really nervous, but when you are out there with all those scouts watching, you tend to do better. We just performed to the best of our ability."

"I feel like I had the best day I could possibly have, and that's what I needed to get noticed by the scouts. Hopefully, I made an impression on a couple of teams. Hopefully, there is one team out there that will give me a chance."

Alex Suber was pleased overall, but felt he could have done a bit better in a couple of areas.

"It was a lot like I have seen out here before, but a lot more scouts this time. The more the merrier. We get more looks that way. I am going to continue to train hard, and hopefully get some phone calls."

Brandon Perry, who is banking on a successful senior year, felt like he did all right despite being a late bloomer.

"I had some ups and downs with times, but did okay in the weight room. This was the biggest crowd we've had in the five years that I have been here. It was a great experience. I am going to keep working out and trying to get better."

Cam Robinson was hampered somewhat by an old injury that kept him out of one drill, but felt like he did pretty well anyway.

"With the talent we had this year, I was expecting a big crowd," said Robinson. "Chris McCoy, Danny Carmichael and Alex Suber brought them in, but we all got to show our talents. Hopefully, after the draft, if my name doesn't get called, I can sign a free agent deal and earn a position on a team."

What happens next for the players who showcased their talents and skills today? Ackerley said that the next step was a series of evaluations, and then the staff would meet to talk about the draft,

"Typically, we have our last staff meetings about two weeks before the draft, and we talk about everybody. When those meetings are over with, we have everybody lined up on the board the way we want them, and the free agents lined up the way we want them. We assign levels to everybody. We have a priority level and a secondary level, and that's the way we do it."

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