

Raiders Fall in Heartbreaker, 34-31

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Louisiana-Monroe remained in the driver's seat for a Sun Belt Conference, rallying for a touchdown in the final minute of the game to defeat Middle Tennessee 34-31 Saturday.

- **Video:** [Football Game Highlights](#)

Steven Jyles threw a 23-yard touchdown pass to Drouzon Quillen with 43 seconds remaining in regulation, capping a 10-play, 80-yard drive.

Middle Tennessee (3-5, 2-3) had rallied from a 27-17

fourth-quarter deficit, powered by two touchdown runs by Eugene Gross.

Gross' 2-yard touchdown run with 2:45 left in the quarter, capping a 12-play, 73-yard drive to pull the Blue Raiders to 27-24.

Middle Tennessee recovered the ensuing onside kick at the ULM 47 yard line. Gross scored three plays later on an 8-yard run to give the Blue Raiders a 31-27 lead - their first of the day.

After the Indians' touchdown, the Blue Raiders had an opportunity to tie the game.

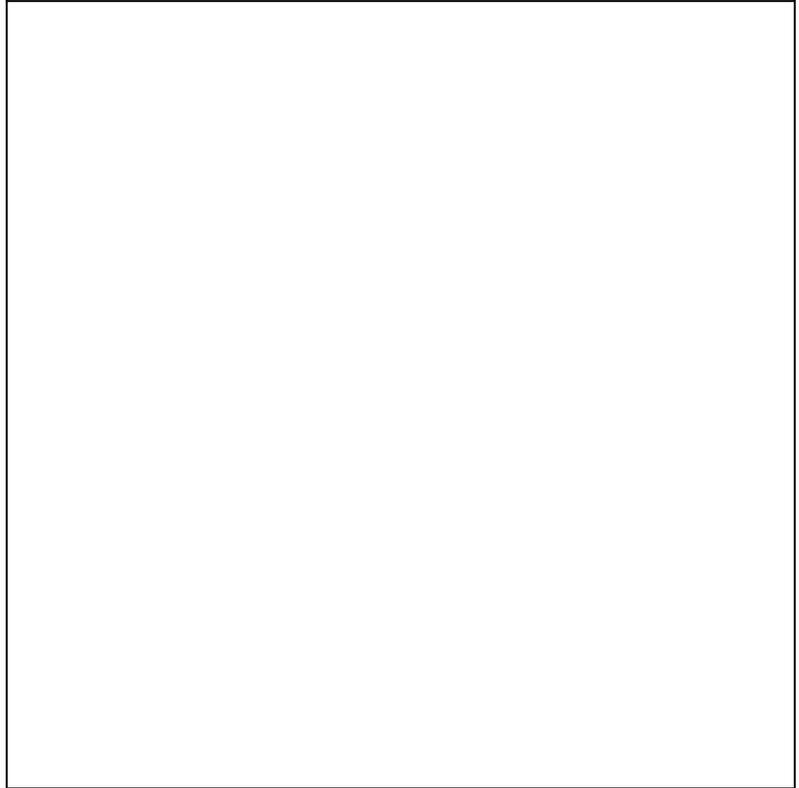
Middle Tennessee began the ensuing drive at its own 30. Clint Marks drove the team to the Indian 33.

After calling its final timeout with 8 seconds remaining, Colby Smith's 52-yard field goal attempt was wide left.

Louisiana-Monroe (4-5, 4-1) jumped out to a 17-0 lead in the first half.

Calvin Dawson scored the first of two touchdowns on the ground with a 1-yard run on the Indians' opening possession.

With 10:18 remaining in the second quarter, ULM stretched the lead to 10 with a 42-yard Ragan Walters field goal.



Jyles connected with Jeremy Hammock with 6:23 left in the half to extend the lead to 17-0.

Middle Tennessee's offense struggled through the first half, but seemed to come to life on the possession following ULM's touchdown.

The Blue Raiders put together a 6-play, 80-yard drive to cut the lead to 17-7. Marks connected with Gross for a 37-yard touchdown strike.

Middle Tennessee added a 27-yard Colby Smith field goal on its first possession of the second half.

The Indians answered with Dawson's second touchdown, a 19-yard scoring run with 8:15 remaining in the third quarter.

Gross scored his second of four touchdowns with 35 seconds left in the third quarter to cut the Louisiana-Monroe 24-17.

Gross led the Blue Raiders' on the ground with 86 yards on 22 carries.

Marks finished the game with 272 yards passing on 20-of-32. He threw one interception.

Dawson rushed for 109 yards for the Indians, who rolled up 459 yards of total offense - 232 on the ground. Jyles completed 28-of-44 passes for 227 yards.

POSTGAME NOTES

MIDDLE TENNESSEE VS LOUISIANA-MONROE NOVEMBER 12, 2005; FLOYD STADIUM

GROSS MOVES AHEAD OF DUNSON AND ANDERSON: Eugene Gross scored his ninth and 10th and 11th rushing touchdowns of the season and ran his career total to 28. That mark ties him with Walter Dunson and Gerald Anderson for fourth place on the all-time rushing touchdowns list. Gross now needs 10 more rushing scores to tie Kippy Bayless for third place.

GROSS NOTCHES A FIRST: Running back Eugene Gross hauled in the first touchdown reception of his career in the game against Louisiana-Monroe. Gross got on the board when he reeled in a 37-yard strike from quarterback Clint Marks late in the second quarter. It was Gross' longest reception since catching a 38-yard pass at Missouri in 2003.

MORE ON GROSS: Eugene Gross rushed for 86 yards, had four receptions for 58 yards and scored four touchdowns in the contest. It marks Gross' second game this season with four scores, tying for the second most in a game.

DEFENSE LESS THAN SPECTACULAR: Middle Tennessee's defense had proven to be the backbone of the team all season, but Saturday's effort was by far the worst of the season for coordinator Marc Criner's unit. The defense allowed a season-high 459 yards and a season-high 27 points. The most telling statistic of the day may have been Louisiana-Monroe's 11-of-19 effort on third down conversions. Akron gained 421 yards, the previous high for yards, while Alabama scored 26 points in the season opener, the previous high for points. The defense had held the last three opponents to 12-of-38 on third downs.

MARKS HAS GOOD DAY THROWING: Junior quarterback Clint Marks threw for a season-high 272 yards in the loss despite going 20-of-33 with one touchdown. The lefthander completed passes to eight different receivers in the contest, including five for 77 yards to Cleannord Saintil. In the process Marks tied Kelly Holcomb and Jonathan Quinn with 12 career 200-yard passing games, tied for second behind Wes Counts (18).

SENIORS GO OUT UNLUCKY: Nineteen Blue Raider seniors participated in Senior Day activities prior to the game, but left the playing field with a tough loss. The class ended their careers 11-10 at Floyd Stadium over the past four years, including a 4-1 mark in 2004.

QUICK HITTERS: TE Clint Corder made his first career reception late in the second quarter against ULM ... WR Linnie Yarbrough started the second half at wide receiver and ran 17 yards for a first down on the first play. Yarbrough also recovered an onside kick late in the fourth quarter to set up Middle Tennessee's final touchdown ... WR Cleannord Saintil has now caught at least one pass in 19 straight games ... The Blue Raiders have now scored four times on their opening drive of a half over the past three games. MT nailed a field goal on its first drive of the second half against ULM ... FB Nick McAfee's 22-yard reception in the third quarter was the longest of his career ... Andy McCollum is now 5-2 in final regular season home games ... The Blue Raiders lost their fourth home game of the season, falling to 1-4 at Floyd Stadium this season ... The Blue Raiders fell to 4-2 all-time against Louisiana-Monroe and 12-6 at home in Sun Belt play.

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