

Blue Raiders turn back Chattanooga; Davis earns 125th Division I win

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Fats Cuyler poured in a game-high 19 points and newcomer Adam Vogelsberg contributed 17 as Middle Tennessee turned back in-state rival Chattanooga, 81-71, to provide coach Kermit Davis with the 125th Division I win of his career in front of 4,297 at Murphy Center.

The Blue Raiders (2-1) won their 18th straight home game against non-conference foes and improved to 10-1 at home against in-state competition under Davis, who is in his fourth season at Middle Tennessee.

In addition to the strong scoring contributions of Cuyler and Vogelsberg, the Blue Raiders continued to get balanced scoring throughout the lineup as Brian Lake, Bud Howard and Tim Blue each added eight points. All 10 Blue Raiders who played scored in the contest.



"I thought (Chattanooga) was another good team that we played," Davis said. "They gave us a very competitive game. We had a couple of chances to try to open up the game and we missed some key shots that could have got us up by 14 or 15. It was a good win against a quality team that I believe will be in the hunt for another (Southern Conference) championship and trip to the NCAA Tournament."

Middle Tennessee shot 52 percent from the field for the second straight game, connecting on 26-of-50 field goals, including a blistering 62 percent (13-of-21) in the second half. Equally impressive is

how the Blue Raiders continued to demonstrate their passing prowess and ability to get one another involved against the Mocs (0-4). Middle Tennessee collected 15 assists on their 26 field goals, led by Kevin Kanaskie and Howard with five each. Middle Tennessee had 12 turnovers, but it forced 20 Chattanooga miscues.

Freshman post Theryn Hudson also continued to make strides in the early season with six points and three rebounds in 14 minutes.

Middle Tennessee tied the game 8-8 on Vogelsberg's 3-pointer with 18:20 remaining in the first half and then took its first lead on Marques Dawson's mid-range jumper with 16:21 remaining in the opening stanza. Although the game was competitive from that point and Middle Tennessee never was able to really pull away, the Blue Raiders also remained in control throughout.

The Blue Raiders stretched their lead to 21-11 midway through the opening half and carried a 38-30 edge into intermission. The Blue Raiders led by as many as 12 in the second half and sealed the win by knocking down eight free throws in the final 90 seconds.

Middle Tennessee returns to action when it begins a three-game road trip at Portland State Saturday at 9 p.m. (Central time).

POSTGAME NOTES:

NO. 125: Middle Tennessee Head Coach Kermit Davis earned his 125th career Division I win with the Blue Raiders' victory over Chattanooga on Tuesday night. Davis, who has coached Middle Tennessee to three straight winning seasons, is now 54-39 at the helm of the Blue Raiders and stands just two victories from tying Ed Diddle for seventh place on the all-time wins list.

PLAYER OF THE GAME: Guard Fats Gulyer was voted the Alexander Automotive Family Player of the Game against Chattanooga by members of the working media. Cuyler poured in a game-high 19 points and hit four three-pointers in 28 minutes. Over the last two games, Cuyler has scored 39 points, hit 9 of 20 3-pointers, and collected three steals.

CAREER-HIGH FOR ADAM: Newcomer Adam Vogelsberg recorded a career-best 17 points in 33 minutes against Chattanooga for his second game in three outings scoring in double figures. The lefthander has particularly enjoyed the friendly confines as he has averaged 16.5 points in two games while connecting on 6 of 11 3-pointers and 13 of 15 free throws.

SPREADING THE WEALTH: Over the last two games, the Blue Raiders have had nine players score at least two points in each contest. Against Chattanooga, all 10 players scored while nine of the 10 hit the scoring column at Indiana State. For the year, the Blue Raiders have played exactly 10 players in all three games.

HOT FROM THE FIELD: Middle Tennessee has shot the basketball exceptionally well over the last two games. During that span, the Blue Raiders are a combined 57-for-109 from the field for 52.2 percent. Also, 30 of the 57 field goals were accompanied by an assist.

TIDBITS: Middle Tennessee is now 11-4 against in-state foes under Kermit Davis, including a 10-1 mark at Murphy Center ... The Blue Raiders have now won 18 consecutive non-conference game at home ... Senior Marcus Morrison made his first start of the season tonight against Chattanooga ... Kevin Kanaskie handed out a career-high five assists as did Bud Howard ... Blue Raiders are now

44-5 under Kermit Davis when leading at the half ... Tonight was the third different starting lineup for Middle Tennessee in three games.

POSTGAME QUOTES:

Middle Tennessee Head Coach Kermit Davis:

About creating a rivalry with the Chattanooga Mocs:

"I think it's a great series and I hope we can continue it. I have a great respect for John (Shulman) and his program. He has quality players and they recruit very well. I hope we can create a rivalry where their fans will come here and our fans will go there."

About Chattanooga:

"I thought it was another good team we played; they gave us a very competitive game. We had a couple of chances to try to open up the game and we missed some key shots that could have got us up by fourteen or fifteen."

About having 10 players score in a close game:

"I haven't coached a game here where we have had 10 of my guys score in a game that was still very competitive in the final minutes of play."

About Chattanooga's guarding against Middle Tennessee:

"John's team does a good job on guarding the post better than anybody in college basketball."

On Middle Tennessee's 18 game winning streak at home against non-conference opponents:

"It's a great stat, streaks are great. We have played great non-conference teams and it's a very good streak to have at home."

On the upcoming road trip:

"Six of our next seven games are on the road. This is taxing, we play Portland State and then drive on Monday night to Logan to play Utah State. We tried to set it up like a (conference) road trip and it will be interesting to see how we do."

On completing free throws late in the second half:

"(Adam) Vogelsberg has a great ability to get to the line. I think it was a big key to the game. We attacked their press, and we kept them on their heels."

PLAYER QUOTES

Center Kyle Young

On Chattanooga doubling teaming:

"Coach told us before coming into tonight's game that we need to expect this. Double teams are always going to be a strategy that coaches will use against our team. I expected it and I tried to handle it. Sometimes it's more difficult than others."

On completing free throws down the stretch:

"It always comes down to the end of the game, who hits more free throws. We had a couple of fast break opportunities which gave us an advantage."

On a close game:

"We are still young and learning a lot of things about our offense. I think a lot of the earlier games will be like this, but hopefully it will pan out as we go deeper into the season."

Guard Fats Cuyler:

On scoring 19 points against Chattanooga:

"I tried not to shoot too many 3's. Coach said to keep shooting and that gave me some confidence."

Guard Bud Howard:

About improving the team's field goal percentage from 44.8 percent to 61.9 percent in the second half:

"Everybody came out and ready to play in the second half and it helped us get our transition game going."

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