Introducing Blue Raider James Gallman

GoBlueRaiders.com will sit down with each men's basketball player leading up to the first official team practice on Oct. 15

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This is the third installment of a series highlighting the 2010-11 Middle Tennessee basketball team as they begin preparation to defend their Sun Belt Conference title.

In this edition, GoBlueRaiders.com sat down with sophomore guard James Gallman, a hot long range shooter from Knoxville, Tenn.

Q: As a Knoxville native, what did it mean to you to start against Tennessee?
A: It felt good because you are playing against your hometown team. I've been watching Tennessee since I was little, and my parents could brag to their friends their son had played against Tennessee. I didn't have as good a game as I wanted, but it was fun.

Q: Why do you enjoy shooting three-pointers?
A: I've always, since I was little, been shooting in trash cans, and things like that. I can't muscle inside for a layup, so shooting long range, where I get a better look at the basket, is easier for me. My high school coach was the first one to tell me to shoot the ball. He said I was the best shooter

in Knoxville, and for me to shoot the ball.

Q: Your high school coach was very impressed with your defense as well as your shooting. How do you respond to that?
A: Whenever we were in the state tournament, and trying to decide who would guard the other team's best player, he'd always look at me, and I'd be trying to look away. He'd be calling 'Gallman', and finally, I'd say 'Yes, Sir', and he'd say, 'That's your man!' and I was thinking 'Aw, man''. I'd be playing defense, and I'm thinking I'm going get too tired to play offense, but he made me play defense, and I got better at it. I am thankful that he did that, because it made me a better player.

Q: What did it feel like the first time you played in Murphy Center for MTSU after competing here in the state tournament?
A: It felt the same in some ways, but it was different because it was a college game, not a high school game. I was comfortable at first, then nervous. The more I realized the differences in the two levels, the more nervous I got.

Q: Why did you choose to play at Middle Tennessee?
A: The coaching staff here let me know they really wanted me. When I came on a visit, I was comfortable and wasn't nervous at all. I liked the coaches, players, and the school. I also knew they had a lot of guards leaving, and I felt I could get a lot of playing time.

Q: The team last year was very close, both on and off the court. What does the team do to help newcomers feel welcome and a part of the team?
A: When you get here to start school, it's different from your visit. I was nervous because I had never been around these guys on a basketball court before. But Boogie (Yates), Montarrio (Haddock) and Calvin (O'Neil) were all great. At first, when we'd play pickup games, Montarrio was always on me, he'd push me around, pick on me. I used to hate 'Terrio' at first, but I learned he was doing it to make me better. We all got close as the season started, and stayed close the rest of the way.

Q: What is your favorite thing about Murfreesboro? A: I really like the campus. I don't really get around Murfreesboro much. I like to hang around the gym and my teammates more than anything else. I'm somewhat of a gym rat.

Q: What have you been working on in the off-season to improve your game?

A: I've been working on my mid-range shooting, playing better defense, driving to the basket, going to my left, stuff like that. I'm just trying to get better in everything.

Q: What are you most looking forward to in the upcoming season?
A: I'm looking for us to have a great season, win the Sun Belt Conference, and go to the NCAA tournament.

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