Blue Raiders see four-game win streak snapped in 72-62 setback

February 11, 2006 · MT Media Relations

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee's season-high four-game winning streak came to a disappointing halt in a 72-62 setback to Denver in front of 5,172 at the Murphy Center Saturday night.

- **Photos:** MT vs. Denver Gallery

The Blue Raiders (12-10, 5-5) have been a solid shooting team at home this season, while Denver has had difficulty winning on the road; however, those trends reversed Saturday. Middle Tennessee shot just 32.8 percent (21-of-64) from the field and 25.9 percent (7-of-27) from 3-point range in the setback. The field goal percentage was the worst home shooting performance for the Blue Raiders under head coach Kermit Davis.

Meanwhile, Denver had its best shooting night of the season and ended a five-game conference road losing streak by knocking down 62.9 percent (26-of-42) of its field goals, including 60 percent (9-of-15) from beyond the arc.

"I'm always honest about my team when I talk to you guys," Davis said in his postgame media interview, adding, "and tonight we were ready to play. We came out with great energy. We had a great practice (Friday) and a great shoot-around (Saturday). Denver just came in here

and beat us. They were the better team tonight."

Middle Tennessee was led by 13 points from Fats Cuyler, while Marcus Morrison added 11 and Bud Howard finished with 10. Denver (13-12, 6-6) was led by DaShawn Walker's 22 points on 8-of-11 shooting, while Yemi Nicholson finished with 16 points and a game-high nine rebounds.

The Blue Raiders' defense was very active and forced 20 turnovers, helping Middle Tennessee score 23 points off miscues; while the home team was guilty of just seven turnovers. Denver managed 10 more points than Middle Tennessee despite taking 22 less shots.

Middle Tennessee will return to action when it plays host to South Dakota State Monday.

POSTGAME NOTES

STREAK ENDS: Middle Tennessee's loss to Denver on Saturday night ended a four-game winning streak for the Blue Raiders. The streak, all against SBC teams, matched the longest winning streak in school history against league foes. Middle Tennessee dropped to 6-3 at home for the year.

CUYLER BREAKS OUT: Senior Fats Cuyler has struggled the past two games with his shooting, but he broke out of his slump against Denver. The Leesburg, Fla., native scored a team-high 13 points and connected on 5 of 11 shots from the field. In his previous two games, Cuyler was just 3 of 13 from the field for a combined nine points.

SHOOTING WOES: The main reason for Middle Tennessee's loss to Denver on Saturday night was shooting. The Blue Raiders had open looks the entire night but just could not get anything to fall as they connected on only 32.8 percent of their shots from the field (21-64). It marked the worst shooting night by the Blue Raiders since making only 32.0 percent of their shots in a loss to Memphis back on Jan. 4. It was also the worst shooting effort in the Murphy Center by the Blue Raiders in the Kermit Davis era.

BENCH SPARKS AGAIN: One bright spot for the Blue Raiders was the play of the reserves. Middle Tennessee outscored the Denver bench, 35-3, and is now averaging 38.8 points a game from its reserves over the past five games. Fats Cuyler and Marcus Morrison led the way off the bench against Denver with 13 points and 11 points, respectively.

PLAYER OF THE GAME: Fats Cuyler was voted the Alexander Automotive Family Player of the Game against Denver by members of the working media.

TIDBITS: Middle Tennessee's coaching staff donned tennis shoes for tonight's game in honor of Coaches vs Cancer ... Middle Tennessee has now made at least one three-pointer in 299 straight games ... Tim Blue fouled out for the third game in a row and the fifth time this season ... The Blue Raiders lost for the first time this season when Kevin Kanaskie started the game at point guard ... Middle Tennessee lost for the first time this year in February and dropped to 16-8 all-time in February under Kermit Davis ... Bud Howard scored 10 points for the Blue Raiders to put him in double figures for the first time since the South Alabama game on Jan. 19 ... Calvin O'Neil matched his career-high with three steals.

Printed on December 8, 2013
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/4820