

Blue Raiders come up short against Trojans

Dasher scores both Middle Tennessee touchdowns

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Troy built an early three-score lead and Middle Tennessee was unable to completely recover, dropping a 42-13 decision on Blackout night Tuesday in front of the second-largest crowd in Floyd Stadium history of 28,010 in Murfreesboro, Tenn., live on ESPN2.

Senior Dwight Dasher made his return to the field, completing 22-of-37 for 172 yards. He also was the team's leader on the ground, amassing 27 yards on 14 carries. Malcolm Beyah paced the squad with four catches.

Corey Robinson finished with 259 yards and three touchdowns, while hitting on 26-of-37 for the Trojans. DuJuan Harris set the tone on the ground, rushing for 80 yards on 11 carries, while Jason Bruce hauled in a team-best seven receptions for 62 yards.

Defensively, safety Kevin Brown finished with a career-high 12 tackles, including 10 solo stops. Kanorris Davis topped the Trojan defense with eight tackles, seven of which were by himself.

Troy capitalized on its first possession, driving 55 yards on just eight plays, while covering 3:10, to jump in front 7-0. The Trojans used four different players at the quarterback position during the drive, which was capped off on a 3-yard shuffle pass from Jamie Hampton to Jerrel Jernigan at 9:30 for the score. The multiple signal callers rotated between traditional drop-back passers and those in the Wildcat formation.



Middle Tennessee could not generate much offense following the score during its next two possessions. On the first play of the next drive after the touchdown, Dasher fell hard on his non-throwing hand, dislocating the pinkie. Then, after the teams traded having the ball, Davis, who tackled Dasher on the injury play, forced a Jeff Murphy fumble on the MT 20, giving Troy (3-2, 2-0 SBC) a short field after Xavier Lamb recovered it on the MT 17.

The Trojans used four plays, despite a drive-opening 15-yard end-around by Jernigan, to find pay dirt again. On 3rd-and-goal from the 5-yard line, Robinson located Tebriarus Gill in the back of the endzone to push the lead to 14-0 at the 2:16 mark of the opening period.

D.J. Taylor punched the ball over the plane at 6:06 of the second quarter to increase the margin to 21-0, as Troy ate up 2:30 off the clock during the seven-play, 56-yard drive. Senior defensive backs Rod Issac and Kevin Brown knocked Hampton out of the game on the first play after he had an 8-yard carry. However, the Trojans would not allow the injury to halt their momentum, as Taylor tallied the team's third touchdown just seven plays later on Taylor's 3-yard rush.

Middle Tennessee (2-3, 1-1 SBC) finally put points on the board with just 1:04 remaining in the half, as Dasher took the snap and went up the middle to cut the lead to 14, 21-7. The Sun Belt Preseason Player of the Year set up the score with a 9-yard strike to Tyler Mason, who was tackled just before the goal line. Dasher factored into eight of the nine plays during the possession, completing one-half of his six attempts through the air for 28 yards and rushing for another five. The Blue Raiders marched 63 yards during the 2:05 drive and entered the intermission down just two scores.

The momentum appeared to continue to go in the direction of Middle Tennessee on the Blue Raiders' opening possession of the second half. The Blue Raiders methodically moved down the field, covering 27 yards in seven plays, but Jacoby Thomas stepped in front of a Dasher pass, intercepting the ball at the Troy 39.

The Trojans would turn around and gain 45 yards on their next drive, being stopped at the MT 16. Michael Taylor then lined up for a 34-yard field goal attempt, but Jamari Lattimore broke through the line and blocked the kick and Jimmy Staten pounced on the loose ball to return the ball to Middle Tennessee's favor.

The Blue Raiders were unable to use the turnover to their advantage and Troy received the ball back after Thomas sacked Dasher for a loss of five yards, setting up a 44-yard Josh Davis punt.

Although another Davis punt, this time a 60-yard boot, pinned the Trojans deep in their own territory, Troy quickly reached the endzone again. The visitors ticked just 1:34 off the clock as they covered 87 yards in five plays, started by a 39-yard rush from Chris Anderson and a 28-yard Robinson toss to Brett Moncrief to land deep in the MT end. Three plays later, Robinson and Gill connected again, on a 9-yard completion to move the score to 28-7 with 1:52 remaining in the third quarter.

Just passed the halfway mark of the final frame, Troy tacked on another score when Robinson collected his third touchdown pass of the game with a 7-yard pass to Jamel Johnson in the front corner of the endzone to make it 35-7 with 6:43 remaining. The Trojans used 11 plays on the drive, chewing 4:51 off the clock and covering 86 yards to seal the win.

Middle Tennessee, however, did not quit. Dasher ran for his second touchdown, a 2-yard carry, to

put the finishing touch on a nine-play, 66-yard drive at 4:27. The ensuing PAT was blocked by Tony Davis, making the score 35-13. Dasher was 4-of-8 during the possession.

The Blue Raiders attempted an onside kick, but Troy recovered. On the Trojans' first play, Harris sprinted 41 yards on an 11-second sideline rush to widen the score to 42-13 with 4:16 left.

Middle Tennessee returns to action at 2:30 p.m. Central Saturday, Oct. 16 at ACC foe Georgia Tech in Atlanta.

Middle Tennessee Postgame Notes:

GREAT CROWD:

A crowd of 28,010 saw the Blue Raiders' annual Blackout game on Tuesday night against Troy. That goes down as the second largest crowd in school history behind last year's Blackout game of 28,105 set against Memphis. Three of the top five crowds in stadium history have occurred under Rick Stockstill.

DASHER RETURNS:

After missing four games due to an NCAA suspension, senior quarterback Dwight Dasher made his return against Troy. The Folkston, Ga., product started and finished 22-of-37 for 172 yards with an interception. He also was the team's leading ground gainer, collecting 27 yards on 14 carries and adding both of the team's touchdowns.

LATTIMORE CONTINUES CLIMB:

Defensive end Jamari Lattimore was credited with 0.5 sacks against Troy to give him 14.5 for his career. The half sack allowed him to break away from a tie for third on the all-time list with Tavares Jones. Lattimore now needs one more sack to jump past Anthony McCord for second place.

LATTIMORE GETS FIRST BLOCK:

Senior Jamari Lattimore recorded his first career blocked kick when he rejected a Troy field goal attempt in the third quarter to give the Blue Raiders blocked three-pointers in consecutive games. The Blue Raiders now have two blocked kicks this season after recording eight in 2009. In 55 games under Rick Stockstill, the Blue Raiders now have 16 blocked kicks with 9 field goals, 6 punts, and 1 PAT.

BROWN REACHES DOZEN:

Senior safety Kevin Brown registered a career-high 12 tackles tonight, including 10 solo stops. His previous career best for tackles was 10 against Kentucky in 2008 and Florida Atlantic in 2009. He had eight solo tackles against North Texas in 2008.

DASHER MOVES UP COMPLETIONS LIST:

Quarterback Dwight Dasher moved into solo possession of fourth place on the school's all-time list with 347 completions in his career. He passed Teddy Morris (326), Joe Craddock (342) and Jonathan Quinn (346) after starting the day ranked seventh.

QUICK HITTERS:

Tonight's game marked the 12th nationally televised game under Rick Stockstill which is more than any other SBC team during his tenure ... MT lost the opening coin toss for the fifth straight time this season ... Dwight Dasher's touchdown run in the second quarter was the 17th rushing TD of his

career and he later added his 18th with a 2-yard run in the fourth quarter ... Middle Tennessee's loss to Troy ended a 7-game conference winning streak for the Blue Raiders ... MT fell to 1-5 on ESPN2 ... The Blue Raiders lost their fifth straight game to Troy in the series ... MT fell to 2-1 all-time in Blackout games ... Tyler Mason had a career-high three receptions ... The 42 points allowed tonight are the most allowed by the Blue Raiders at Floyd Stadium since ULL scored 57 in 2003 in a four-overtime game.

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