Blue Raiders drop Lincoln Memorial 76-61

Four players in double figures

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee started the game slow but caught its stride midway through the first half and kept going as four players tallied double figure scoring in a 76-61 win over Lincoln Memorial.

Redshirt sophomore Jason Jones led the pack with 22 points in his first appearance as a Blue Raider going 10 for 14 from the field.

"It was a big game for me after missing last season. I spent a lot of last year trying to stay in shape so I can help my team out," Jones said. "We need to come into practice this week with a focused mentality on the season and execute on the offensive and defensive end. It starts tomorrow."

Sophomore JT Sulton also added to Middle Tennessee's arsenal with 18 points and nine rebounds of his own.

"We shot 53%, but just didn't get enough shots up. I thought J.T. brought some energy and freshman Kerry Hammonds played well too. So there were some bright spots for sure," head coach Kermit Davis said. "I think we played hard, but we can nit-pick a lot of things. We just have to get a good week of practice. A week from tomorrow will get here quick."

Freshman Shawn Jones and Rod Emanuel added 11 and 10 points respectively with S. Jones pulling down eight rebounds while Emanuel had seven.

As a team the Blue Raiders shot 53.3 percent from the field but struggled with turnovers committing 25. Middle Tennessee had 40 total rebounds with 14 of those on the offensive side of the ball.

"First of all, I'd like to compliment LMU on their play, they played very hard. We scheduled this team with purpose, and we think they're the best under Division I team in our state. They're athletic, have good players, and have won a ton of games," Davis said. "I was very disappointed in our turnovers. Part of that is on B.J. (James Washington) and Jimmy (Oden). They're two good point guards for our team, but they had nine turnovers between them, and 25 turnovers against that team is just unacceptable."

The Blue Raiders trailed early in the first half by as much as nine, 17-8, after a four-minute scoring drought. Middle Tennessee rallied and after a three-pointer by Emanuel took the lead back and held onto it until the half. The Blue Raiders led 33-27 at the break.

J. Jones led the team with eight while S. Jones and Emanuel added seven points each at the break. S. Jones also performed well on defense with four rebounds.

Middle Tennessee started the second half strong and by the 12-minute mark had opened up a 14-point lead, 52-38. The Blue Raiders took a 17-point lead, 62-45, with 5:40 remaining on the clock.

Middle Tennessee will officially open the 2010-11 season on Friday, Nov. 12 at 7 p.m. when it plays host to Tennessee Temple.

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