

Vandy bigs spell trouble for Blue Raiders

Jason Jones leads in rebounds and scores 15

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. –

R-sophomore Jason Jones guided Middle Tennessee throughout the night in a 72-53 loss to Vanderbilt in Murphy Center on Tuesday night.

J. Jones went 6 for 9 from the field and 2 for 3 at the charity stripe to score a team high 15 points against the Commodores. The Memphis, Tenn., native also had a team high six rebounds.

“I thought Jason played well. He had 15 points and six rebounds, he was active. I was really pleased with what Jason did,” head coach Kermit Davis said. “When you play in games like this, the guys that you depend on have to play, and J. T. Sulton doesn’t score from the field. He had one point. Washington and Gallman didn’t play like they needed to play in a game like this for us to upset a potential Top Ten or 15 team.”



Senior James Washington was the only other player in double figures with 10 points as the Blue Raiders (4-8) shot 37 percent from the field.

Middle Tennessee struggled at the free throw line making just 8 of 14 opportunities while the Commodores (9-2) connected on 24 of 36. VU shot 43.5 percent from the field with four players scoring in double figures. Jeffery Taylor led the way with 18 points after going 4 for 7 from the field and eight for 10 at the free throw line.

"I thought Vanderbilt played very well. We had no answer for the big guy (Ezeli). We really absorbed a ton of foul trouble early. They did a good job of re-attacking us around the goal, great ball movement, and good physical strength," Davis said. "We had a chance. We missed a 50-50 ball when we were down five or six, and the point guard threw the ball away, and the ball flip-flopped to about 10 or 11. And in the second half, we got it down to about 8 or 9, but we couldn't sustain it. Give all the credit to Vanderbilt. Kevin (Stallings) has a really good team. They play intelligent, tough, a really good college basketball team."

Sophomore JT Sulton also had six rebounds on the night as the Blue Raiders recorded 34 as a team. It was just two less rebounds than VU and the team had two more offensive rebounds than the Commodores.

The Blue Raiders cut the VU lead to two after a jumper by Emanuel 12-10 with 9:51 on the clock. Then a dunk by Hammonds tied at the game at 12 9:30. The Commodores then scored 10 unanswered to take a 22-12 lead with just under seven minutes to play.

The Blue Raiders got back within nine and a trey by Hammonds made it a six-point game, 30-24, with 1:46 to play. VU continued to make shots and took a 14-point lead into the half, 41-27.

Emanuel and J. Jones led all scorers at the half with eight points as Middle Tennessee shot 42.3 percent in the first half. The Blue Raiders had 13 rebounds at the break led by Emanuel with three while VU had 18.

Middle Tennessee kept the Commodores close to begin the second half staying within 12. The Blue Raiders were scoreless for five minutes midway through the second half allowing VU to take a 22-point lead, 64-42, 5:04.

The Blue Raiders will take a few days off for the Christmas holiday before resuming practice to prepare for Tennessee State. Middle Tennessee will play host to Tennessee State on Wednesday, Dec. 29 at 7 p.m.

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