Blue Raiders survive for 93-91 overtime win over UL-Lafayette

Four score in double figures

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LAFAYETTE, La. - Middle Tennessee made key free throws and played solid defense down the stretch to take a 93-91 overtime win over UL-Lafayette Saturday night.

The Blue Raiders (7-9, 2-1) had four players score in double figures and had solid play from some unlikely players as six players fouled out in the game.

R-freshman Zane Gibson entered the game with 20 seconds left in overtime to shoot a free throw for senior James Washington who had to leave the game due to blood. Gibson hit the shot to give the Blue Raiders a four-point lead.

Then to end the game junior Kyle Hunt rebounded a ULL (3-12, 1-3) shot with two seconds left to ensure the Blue Raider win.

"For 20 minutes we played as well as we can play. We shot the ball, ran offense, and guarded. Then to begin the second half we must have missed five layups, great shots and they got momentum and just played unbelievable for a 15 to 18 minute period," head coach Kermit Davis said. "We had six guys foul out, they make the shot to go to overtime, and we're playing Kerry Hammonds at the four. He has never played there. The official said James Washington had blood on his mouth. I couldn't see the blood but he said pick a shooter so I picked Zane and he makes it. Then Kyle Hunt has a huge rebound and it was amazing. It's one of those league games that should have been on TV but you would have had a lot of commercials because so many fouls were called."

Washington led all players with 23 points after going 5 for 11 from the field, including four treys, and made all nine of his free throw opportunities.

R-sophomore Jason Jones also provided 35 quality minutes as he was 4 for 7 from the field and 9 for 11 at the charity stripe to score 17 points. Sophomore JT Sulton added 16 points after going 6 for 9 from the field and sophomore James Gallman rounded out the double figure scorers with 12. Gallman made 8 of 10 free throw opportunities including three in overtime.

The Blue Raiders ended the game shooting 45.1 percent and made 41 of 49 free throws. Defensively, Middle Tennessee outrebounded ULL 36 to 29 and had 11 offensive rebounds. Senior Trevor Ottley led the team defensively with four blocks, two steals and five rebounds. R-junior Jimmy Oden led the team in rebounds with seven.

ULL had four players score in double figures led by La'Ryan Gary who scored 20 after going 6 for 9 from the field. Scottie Farrington posted the only double-double in the game with 15 points and 10 rebounds.

After trailing 3-0 to begin play, the Blue Raiders scored eight straight, including five by Sulton, to take an early 8-3 lead.

Middle Tennessee continued to perform well extending the run 18-2 for a 13-point lead as the Ragin' Cajuns took a time out.

Middle Tennessee continued to consistently score and at the eight-minute media timeout had kept the lead at 10, 27-17. The Blue Raiders held off a late ULL run to take a 53-37 lead at the half. It is the first time since playing Houston Baptist on Feb. 13, 2010 that the Blue Raiders have scored 50 or more points in a half.

The Blue Raiders had one of their best halves of the season with two players scoring in double figures on its way to shooting 57.7 percent. Sulton led all scorers at the break with 15 after going 6 for 7 from the field. Washington added 12 with all of his being treys.

Ottley aided the defense with three blocks and two steals while Washington and Oden each had three rebounds. ULL started the second half strong going on a 14-3 run cutting the Blue Raider lead to five, 56-51 with 12:15 remaining on the clock.

The Blue Raiders were scoreless for 7:30 before a basket by Gallman kept them up by three, 58-55. ULL continued to chip away and four straight by Perez kept the Ragin' Cajuns within five, 66-61, with seven minutes to play.

J. Jones scored a bucket and two free throws to keep Middle Tennessee up 74-69 with 3:33 left in the game. ULL cut it to four, 75-71 and then a trey by Daigle made it a one-point game, 75-74, with 1:30 on the clock. Daigle then hit two free throws after being fouled to give ULL a 76-75 lead with one minute to play.

Then Charles hit a layup with 42 seconds making it a one-point game in favor of the Blue Raiders, 77-76. Bureau tied it at 77 with a free throw of his own and then with no time running off the clock Washington was fouled. Washington made both of his free throws to give Middle Tennessee a 79-77

lead with 33.3 seconds on the clock.

The two teams traded free throws and with 17.8 seconds on the clock Gray hit two to tie the game at 80. Washington hit a jumper with 6.8 seconds on the clock and ULL answered with a jumper by Daigle at the buzzer to send it into overtime.

The Blue Raiders made four free throws and played solid defense in overtime to keep a two-point lead, 88-86 with as little as 26.8 remaining on the clock. Middle Tennessee then made five free throws and was able to keep ULL at bay for a one-point win.

The Blue Raiders return to the friendly confines of Murphy Center for a conference matchup with Florida Atlantic. Tipoff is set for 7 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 13. After the game with the Owls, Middle Tennessee hits the road again traveling to Jonesboro, Ark., to play Arkansas State on Saturday, Jan. 15.

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