

# Hammonds drains five treys to guide Blue Raiders

## Freshman scores 28 points in 85-62 win over USA

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### MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Freshman Kerry Hammonds put on a show for his hometown crowd on Saturday afternoon to lead the Blue Raiders to an 85-62 win over South Alabama at Murphy Center. Hammonds scored 28-points, which included five treys, on his way to setting the record for most points in a game by a freshman. The last Blue Raider freshman to score 23 or more points was Desmond Yates with 23 on Nov. 27, 2006 against Belmont. "I'm just glad we won. Coach told me that it was time for me to step up, and so after I made my second three, I just kept shooting, and it kept going in," Hammonds said. "I think this was the game I needed to get my confidence back, and I think I'll be able to keep improving every game." The Murfreesboro, Tenn., native missed just one shot in the game ending play 9 for 10 from the field. Hammonds set



new career highs for points, field goals, 3-point field goals, free throws, and minutes in the game with the Jaguars. "It was a complete game, good to win, in our Coaches vs. Cancer afternoon. I thought it was a great afternoon crowd. I'm proud of our players, great to see our freshman, Kerry Hammonds, who's had some struggles offensively, break out in a big way. He deserves it," head coach Kermit Davis said. "He got hurt his senior year (at Siegel HS), but when I watched the tape of his game with Shelbyville his junior year, he made seven or eight three's in a game, and just got going. He never got down, he just keeps practicing, keeps playing, and you just knew if he ever got it going, you knew what he was capable of, and he just absolutely wore it out for about that 15 minute period. He

just separated everything. We ran a few sets for him, and our guys did a great job of setting screens, found him, gave him great passes. What I liked about him, he was aggressive to the rim and got to the foul line seven times." Middle Tennessee (12-12, 7-4) has now won five of its last six games and is 5-1 in Sun Belt Conference action in Murphy Center this season. The Blue Raiders shot 53.4 percent from the field as a team and shot 52.9 percent from behind the arc. Senior James Washington and r-sophomore Jason Jones also posted double-figure scoring. Washington went 4 for 10 from the field for 13 points while J. Jones ended play 4 for 9 scoring 11. Middle Tennessee's bench, led by Hammonds, also played a key role in the win scoring 44 points. "Our assists have really shot up. For a period of time, we were getting six, seven, eight assists a game. The last three games, we've gotten 20, 15 and 16, so the ball is moving. Our zones have gotten more effective, and it's helped us stretch some leads out, and helped us get some good Sun Belt wins," Davis said. Defensively, Middle Tennessee had 33 rebounds, 12 on the offensive side of the ball, three blocks and nine steals. J. Jones led the team with six rebounds while senior Trevor Ottley added five. Ottley along with r-junior Jimmy Oden and freshman Shawn Jones recorded two steals each. USA (10-12, 4-7) shot 46.8 percent in the game but Middle Tennessee handled it in the second half as the team made just seven field goals. The Jaguars' Augustine Rubit led the team in scoring and defense with 26 points and 13 rebounds. Rubit ended the game 11 for 16 from the field and had nine offensive rebounds. The two teams traded points to begin play with neither taking more than a two-point lead as late as the eight-minute mark of the first half. Middle Tennessee took a four-point lead, 33-29, after a shot by S. Jones with 4:17 to play. Hammonds scored the next five points for the Blue Raiders to give them a 38-33 lead with 2:44 on the clock. Then Washington hit a trey making it 41-35 with 1:27 left in the half. Middle Tennessee used a 20-11 run in the final seven minutes of play to take a 43-36 lead into the half. The Blue Raiders shot 45.9 percent in the first half with Washington scoring a team high 11 points after going 3 for 5 from the field. USA shot 60 percent in the first half as a team with Rubit going 6 for 8 from the field for a team high 13 points. Defensively, USA had 17 rebounds while Middle Tennessee had 16 rebounds with the Blue Raiders grabbing nine on the offensive side of the ball. Rubit led both teams in that category as well with seven total rebounds. Middle Tennessee started the second half on a 9-1 run including a trey by Hammonds to go ahead 52-37 with 16:14 on the clock. The Blue Raiders extended that run to 20-9 on their way to taking an 18-point lead, 63-45, with 12:04 remaining in the game. The Blue Raiders continued to play well with Hammonds scoring 11 of the teams' 13 points at one point as the team pulled ahead 74-51. The Blue Raiders will travel to Bowling Green, Ky., for its game with Western Kentucky on Feb. 10 at 7 p.m. Then the team returns to Murphy Center for a doubleheader against FIU. Middle Tennessee will face the Panthers at 4:30 p.m. Chip Walters and Kyle Turnham will have all the action from Murphy Center on the Blue Raider Network. Blue Raider fans are invited to attend Kermit Davis Live! each Monday night at Coach's Grill in Murfreesboro. Chip Walters, the voice of the Blue Raiders, hosts the show which airs from 7-8 p .m. on WGNS (100.5. FM, 101 .9 FM, 1450 AM), WMOT (89 .5) and WNSR (560 AM). Fans have the opportunity to ask questions by calling into the show at 1-866-RAIDERS, emailing [radio@goblueraiders.com](mailto:radio@goblueraiders.com) or submitting a question if they are in attendance. The Sun Belt Championships will be held in Hot Springs, Ark., March 4-8. Tickets for all sessions are \$83 and on sale through the Blue Raider Ticket Office by contacting 1-888-YES-MTSU or by visiting [goblueraiders.com](http://goblueraiders.com).