Blue Raiders gearing for key scrimmage

Team at halfway point of preseason camp

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COACH RICK STOCKSTILL ON SATURDAY SCRIMMAGE: "It has been a week since we scrimmaged so this one is very important from an assignment standpoint individually and for execution as a unit. We were installing so much early on that the first scrimmage was not as crisp because the players were so hesitant. Now we have had more practice time and I expect them to play much better on Saturday."

"This scrimmage will also be very important for a few guys who have been out with injuries. They have not practiced and need to get hit and get their confidence back."

"We will have a great idea of the two-deep after this scrimmage. There will be a couple of positions that will take a little more time but for the most part I will have a good idea of things after Saturday."

COACH DAVID BIBEE ON SAFETIES: "I think we are in good shape. We did lose two 3-year starters, but we have guys back that played and have contributed to the team in the past. They have not played in the capacity that they will be playing this year, but I think they are ready for the challenge.

"Derrick Crumpton and Erik Russell are the two starters, and they are doing a good job. They are both outstanding players and very committed to what they are doing. Then, we have two other guys that I am not afraid to throw in there in Sammy Seamster and Denzell Guerra. Both have contributed

and made plays for us. Juno Prudhomm has had the best fall camp since he stepped on campus. He's had surgery on his knees, but he is better now than he's been. Reggie Farmer may wind up getting on special teams."

"I feel really good about our two freshmen. Actually, Kevin Byard is a kid that is almost ready to play now, he's just a little ahead of James Roberson, not necessarily in anything but maturity and knowing what to do, but I feel good about them."

COACH DAVID BIBEE ON NICKEL BACKS: "I'm not sure who the nickels and dimes will be right now. In the past, the safeties have been nickels and dimes, but the way things are now, there is a good chance that some of the corners may be nickels and dimes. The great thing about it is that, if Sammy and Denzell continue to develop, then we've got Eric and Derrick that could go right back and play the nickel and dime. But, because the safeties are younger, we don't want to strap them up with too many things to think about."

"Marquise Dixon and Kenneth Gilstrap have both played nickel in the past, and we are working Chris Sharpe at nickel, so we have those cornerbacks that we are getting looks at as well. No matter what, we should have good depth as well as quality players. I feel like we are going to be just fine."

COACH STEVE ELLIS ON CORNERBACKS: "Right now we are in a developmental process, guys developing, sharpening their skills. Arness Ikner is doing really well. He's taking that next step and playing similar to (Alex) Suber and Rod Isaac and Mark Udell. He is going into the second year in this system, he's had a great fall camp, and he's doing well. T.L. Edwards played a little bit last year, and he's taken another step forward. He comes to work every day, he's healthy for the first time since he has been here, and has great lateral movement, so we are excited about him."

"Kenneth Gilstrap is a talented guy, red-shirted last year after ACL surgery. He's quick and versatile. He will see time as a returner and in our dime packages. Those three guys have really stood out to me along with Chris Sharpe, who was the most improved guy this spring. He got stronger in the off-season, and even more so this summer. It's a young group, but talented, and they are learning every day to play defensive back."

"Khari Burke is a newcomer who red-shirted last year, and we are expecting big things out of him. He's "Suber-ish" (Alex Suber), got that same mold, and has had an excellent camp. Again, those guys just haven't played a lot, but they are definitely getting better, and I'm just ready for the ride."

SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH … D.D. KYLES

What is the best Halloween Costume that you ever wore? I would have to say Spiderman. I just love Spiderman.
What is the craziest thing you ever did in high school? You know those portable toilets that are used on construction sites. We put one of them in the school.
What famous person would you like to have following you on Twitter. Beyonce.
What is the worst part of pre-season camp? The worst part is getting hurt.
What is the best part of pre-season camp? The best part is we are coming together as a team.
What is your dream job? Anything that is successful. It doesn't matter what it is.
What is your home town, and what is it famous for? Tampa. Florida, and it is famous for the cannon that goes off every time Tampa Bay scores.

SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH … ANDREW BANKS

What is the best Halloween Costume that you ever wore? I was a referee. I had the flags, the whistle, the pants, everything.
What is the craziest thing you ever did in High School? It was a prank. We put little rats, mice on the high school floor.
What famous person would you like to have following you on twitter? It would be between Mike Vick or Ochocinco.
What is the worst part of pre-season camp? The heat
What is the best part of pre-season camp? The coming together as a team.
What is your dream job? It would be a job that I could be in a position to give back to the kids at home, give them all a better way out.
What is your hometown, and what is it famous for? Washington D.C., and we are famous for the White House.

FAMILY 4-PACK: When Middle Tennessee opens the 2011 home football season on September 10th against Georgia Tech, families should be well represented among the anticipated sell-out crowd with the debut of the Family-4-Pack. The "Family-4-Pack will consist of four reserved seat tickets, four hot dog vouchers, four Pepsi vouchers and four rally towels. The Family-4-Pack will sell for $100. Family-4-Packs as well as season tickets, and individual game tickets are available by calling 1-888-YES-MTSU or by going online at www.GoBlue Raiders.com/GameDay.

NEXT PRACTICE: The Blue Raiders will practice on Saturday at 3:55 PM. The practice is CLOSED.

SEASON TICKETS: 1-888-YES-MTSU OR GoBlueRaiders.com.

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