

# Strong first quarter lifts Blue Raiders to road win

## MT crosses 450 offensive yards for fourth-straight game

October 22, 2011 · Athletic Communications

### BOCA RATON, Fla. –

Quarterback Logan Kilgore ignited a 21-0 lead after the opening 15 minutes and Middle Tennessee never looked back in claiming a 38-14 victory at Florida Atlantic Saturday evening in front of 16,344 at the sparkling new FAU Stadium in Boca Raton, Fla. The sophomore signal caller finished 28-of-39 for 218 yards and three touchdowns, while Jeff Murphy completed all three of his attempts for 74 yards in a fourth-quarter relief role. Their combined effort, coupled with 187 rushing yards, pushed the Blue Raiders over the 450-yard mark for the fourth-consecutive game, a first for the program's FBS era. William Pratcher was the leading ground gainer with 125 yards on 23 carries. Defensively, Darin Davis registered nine tackles, while Eric Russell added a half dozen stops for Middle



Tennessee. The Owls were led by Alfred Morris with 153 yards on the ground, over one-half of the team's overall yardage. Quarterback Graham Wilbert tallied just 104 yards through the air on 10-of-24. Florida Atlantic's defense was paced by Marcus Bartels with 12 tackles and David Hinds with 10 stops. The Blue Raiders put the first points on the board just a short time after receiving the opening kickoff. They needed only eight plays to cover 63 yards, capped by a 20-yard Kilgore strike to Beyah down the visitor sideline for the touchdown at 12:17. The MT signal caller was 7-of-7 for 57 yards on the drive, which lasted just 2:43 and gave the Blue Raiders a 7-0 advantage. Middle Tennessee continued to push the ball offensively with an aggressive, up-tempo attack. A FAU punt started the

Blue Raiders on their own 20, but facing 80 yards proved to be not a daunting task. Middle Tennessee went the distance in 10 plays when Kilgore completed his next five passes for 36 yards and Pratcher rattled off 41 yards on three carries. The score came at 6:18 as Kilgore located Shane Blissard in the back of the end zone to lift MT to a 14-0 edge. After the Blue Raider defense forced a three-and-out, Kilgore and the Blue Raider offense continued to push forward. He broke the school record for consecutive pass completions along the way to the third Middle Tennessee (2-4, 1-2 Sun Belt) touchdown through the air, a 23-yard connection with Andrew Banks, at 3:17 for a 21-0 lead. Kilgore stretched his consecutive streak to 18 with the score, breaking the old standard of 15 set by Wes Counts in 2001. The consecutive passes continued on the next Blue Raider possession, as he extended it to 19 by finding Blissard for eight yards. Kilgore's next attempt was thrown out-of-bounds, stopping the streak, which was the second longest nationally Saturday behind the all-time single-game NCAA record of 26 set by East Carolina's Dominique Davis against Navy. After MT was forced to punt for the first time in the game, Florida Atlantic (0-7, 0-4 Sun Belt) finally reached the end zone on its next possession. Wilbert was 3-of-3 for 21 yards, but the key play was a 48-yard scamper by Morris. Wilbert hit Darian Williams for a five-yard touchdown pass at the 9:57 mark to pull the Owls within two scores, 21-7. Kilgore and Beyah reunited for the fourth time on the first play of the next Blue Raider drive, giving the receiver 100 catches in his career. He became just the 11th player in school history to reach the century mark and the first since Patrick Honeycutt joined the elusive club in 2009. Neither team was able to score for the remainder of the first half. It appeared Middle Tennessee would have a chance to punch the ball into the end zone one more time before halftime; however, Brentley Harstad stepped in front of a Kilgore pass at the 7-yard line to thwart the threat and keep it a two-score contest in the Blue Raiders' favor. FAU began the third quarter with a 20-yard dash by Morris, but on the next play, Arness Ikner stripped Morris of the ball and Omar McLendon fell on it, giving MT the ball back and setting a new season high with its third takeaway. Unfortunately for the Blue Raiders, they were unable to convert the turnover into much offense and a Nathaniel Toulson punt returned the ball back to the Owls. After Florida Atlantic was unable to do anything with its possession, Middle Tennessee held the ball for four plays before Kilgore again was picked off, as Keith Reaser grabbed the ball at the FAU 41 and raced 33 yards to the MT 26 to set the Owls up with a short field. The distance did not benefit Florida Atlantic, however, as on its first play, Wilbert returned the pigskin back to the Blue Raiders. Russell hauled in an errant throw by the quarterback two yards deep in the end zone. He returned the miscue 64 yards to the Owl 36, and following a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct flag, Middle Tennessee needed just 21 yards to find pay dirt again. However, the Blue Raider offense continued to sputter and could only mount six yards on its four plays before Alan Gendreau knocked in a 32-yard field goal to push the margin to 17, 24-7, with 7:50 remaining in the third frame. The two teams traded possessions with Toulson pinning Florida Atlantic at its own 4-yard line with a 48-yard boot. Two plays later, Xavier Stinson put the ball on the ground with David Jones falling on it. Middle Tennessee needed just two plays itself to turn the turnover into points, as Pratcher raced between the tackles and increased the Blue Raider edge to 24, 31-7, with 4:13 left in the third quarter. Murphy came on to relieve Kilgore to start the final 15 minutes. Three plays later, Jamere Johnson punched the ball loose from Pratcher's grasp and Bartels landed on it for a MT turnover at its own 27-yard line. The Owls were productive with the short field. On the third play, Derek Moise hauled in a Wilbert pass and tiptoed in-bounds at the 1-yard line for a 24-yard completion. A play later, Stephen Curtis stretched the ball across the goal line and Florida Atlantic cut it to 31-14 with 12:59 remaining. Murphy and the Blue Raider offense marched right down the field on the ensuing drive in an effort to counter the FAU score. However, once MT reached the 3-yard line, and facing fourth-and-goal, Kyle Griswold was stopped for a loss of 17 and the Owls began their next possession at the 20-yard line. Mickey Groody punted on the

next Florida Atlantic possession and MT started its ensuing drive on its own 46. Three plays later, Murphy found Tyler Mason for a 34-yard pass along the home sideline. Once again, the Blue Raiders made it inside the 5-yard line. However, after Mason and Murphy connected on another completion to the 4-yard line, a 15-yard penalty pushed MT back. The penalty did not deter the Middle Tennessee offense from moving forward. Griswold set the Blue Raiders up with a good look at the end zone again with a 14-yard rush up the middle. Then, he capped the drive with a 1-yard carry into pay dirt to increase the advantage to 24 once again, 38-14, with 2:23 to play. After Florida Atlantic began its final possession, the fifth loss fumble of eight total on the night for the Owls was forced by Morris Moore. Jonathan Brooks grabbed it to seal the victory. Middle Tennessee will return home next week for its next game by playing host to Louisiana at 6:30 p.m. at Floyd Stadium.

#### **Middle Tennessee Postgame Notes:**

**KILGORE SETS SCHOOL MARK:** Sophomore QB Logan Kilgore set a new school record when he completed the first 19 passes he attempted against FAU. The previous record for consecutive completions was 15 set by Wes Counts in 2001. The NCAA record is 26 for a single-game, which was set earlier in the day by East Carolina QB Dominique Davis against Navy.

**KILGORE CHASING RECORD:** QB Logan Kilgore is well on his way to breaking the single-season record at MT for touchdown passes. With three against FAU, Kilgore ran his season total to 15 to rank in a tie for sixth on the single-season list. The record is 23 set by Dwight Dasher in 2009.

**A FIRST FOR THE OFFENSE:** Middle Tennessee racked up 479 yards of total offense in the win over FAU. The Blue Raiders have now registered more than 450 yards in four straight games for the first time in their FBS era (since 1999). MT had 582 yards at Troy, 477 yards against Memphis and 482 yards against WKU.

**BACK-TO-BACK FOR PRATCHER:** RB William Pratcher went over the 100-yard rushing mark for the second consecutive game when he registered a career-high 125 yards on 23 carries against FAU. It marks Pratcher's second career 100-yard game and he is the first Blue Raider to record back-to-back 100-yard games since D.D. Kyles and Dwight Dasher in 2009. Pratcher has now notched his career-high in rushing for the fourth straight game.

**BEYAH REACHES 100:** With six catches tonight against FAU, senior Malcolm Beyah reached triple digits for his career. Beyah now has 102 receptions to rank 10th on the all-time list at MT, passing the 100 by Chris Henry (2002-05).

**BEYAH MOVES TO 8TH:** Senior Malcolm Beyah's first quarter touchdown reception was the 13th of his career. That ties him with Mike Pittman and Vince Parks for 8th on the all-time TD receptions list.

**BLUNT GETS START:** Sophomore Roderic Blunt earned his first career start tonight against FAU. Blunt, from Miramar, FL, started at WILL LB in place of injured Craig Allen.

**QUICK HITTERS:** QB Logan Kilgore matched his personal-best with 28 completions tonight against FAU ... LB Leighton Gasque recorded his team-leading fourth sack late in the 3rd quarter ... PK Alan Gendreau's 32 yard FG in third quarter was the 43rd of his career ... Eric Russell returned his 3rd quarter interception 64 yards ... WR Andrew Banks' 23 yard TD catch in the first quarter was the first of his career ... WR Shane Blissard made his fourth career TD grab in the first quarter and the first for the senior this season ... By losing the coin toss tonight, the Blue Raiders have lost every toss on the

road this year ... LBs Corey Carmichael and Jonathan Brooks both returned against FAU following a two-game suspension ... MT forced a season-high six turnovers ... MT is now 5-1 under Rick Stockst against FAU.

---

*Printed on July 25, 2014*

*Original URL: <http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/55999>*