# Middle Tennessee drops home conference game to Louisiana

## Blue Raiders celebrate Hall of Fame Day

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**MURFREESBORO, Tenn. –** Middle Tennessee never got on track on either side of the ball in falling 45-20 to visiting Louisiana in front of 13,500 on Hall of Fame Day in Murfreesboro, Tenn., Saturday night. The Blue Raiders inducted five new members into their athletic hall of fame earlier in the day but could not close the monumental occasion with a win at night. Logan Kilgore threw for 239 yards on 22-of-40 passes, including a high of seven to Malcolm Beyah for 86 yards and the lone touchdown toss. William Pratcher led the Middle Tennessee ground game with 73 yards on 19 carries. Gorby Loreus and Roderic Blunt paced the defensive unit with nine tackles apiece with both players registering five solo stops. Alonzo Harris tallied 189 yards on 33 carries, including a pair of touchdowns. Starting quarterback Blaine Gautier added 95 yards, including a long of 80, as UL collected 338 total yards on the ground. Gautier contributed 139 yards through the air on 13-of-18 attempts. Harry Peoples was the top receiver with seven grabs for 76 yards. Lance Kelley had a team-high nine tackles, including eight solo, for Louisiana. An initial three-and-out by the Blue Raiders was followed by a Josh Davis punt to the Ragin' Cajun 2-yard line. After Louisiana began to move the ball, advancing out to the 42-yard line, Arness Ikner poked the ball loose from Aaron Spikes five yards behind the line of scrimmage before falling on it for the game's first turnover. Unfortunately for Middle Tennessee, the first play on the next drive was a Kilgore pass picked off by Melvin White returning the ball to the Cajuns. Louisiana used nine plays on its next possession to put the first points on the board with a 16-yard reverse from Darryl Surgent for a 7-0

lead at the 7:23 mark of the first quarter. The Ragin' Cajuns picked up five first downs during the 84-yard drive, while Gautier completed all three of his attempts for 25 yards after Harris started it with a 27-yard rush. Middle Tennessee started its next drive near midfield after a 37-yard kick return by Eric Russell. However, again, it was short lived as Kilgore was intercepted by Devon Lewis-Buchanan on the third play and the linebacker sprinted through the Blue Raiders down the middle of the field. He went the remainder distance untouched for a 55-yard touchdown interception return, giving Louisiana (7-2, 5-1 SBC) a 14-0 edge at 6:17 of the opening 15 minutes. After the two teams traded punts, Middle Tennessee started deep in its own end at the 7-yard line. By the end of the quarter, the Blue Raiders moved into Ragin' Cajun territory at the UL 30-yard line. After three-straight Pratcher carries started the second quarter, Kilgore connected with Tavarres Jefferson for a 5-yard gain to the 15. As he was being tackled, Lance Kelley knocked the ball free and White grabbed it. He brought it back five yards, setting up the next Cajun drive at the 14-yard line. Seven consecutive rushes opened the possession, including a 22-yard Harris carry on the second play which he dragged MT defenders along the way. The Blue Raider defense then stepped up and Leighton Gasque sacked Gautier for a six-yard loss, forcing Louisiana to kick the ball away. After Middle Tennessee (2-5, 1-3 SBC) was stopped on its ensuing drive, the Ragin' Cajuns started at their own 10. Ninety yards later, UL was back finding pay dirt on a 4-yard Harris touchdown carry with 2:15 left in the half. The visitors covered the 90 yards on 11 plays, which featured a 28-yard Harris rush on third down and a 20-yard connection between Gautier and Surgent. Two plays after that, the Blue Raiders were flagged for a pass interference call in the end zone, setting up the final two plays from just five yards away. No other scoring happened before the intermission and the Ragin' Cajuns carried the three-touchdown advantage into the break. Louisiana received the second-half kick and Javone Lawson appeared to fumble on the return. However, after an official review, he was ruled down and the Cajuns maintained possession. Three plays later, Gautier went around the left side and split the seam for an 80-yard keeper untouched to give Louisiana a 28-0 margin with 13:25 to go in the third quarter. Middle Tennessee marched quickly down field to tally its first points of the game. After starting at their own 41, the Blue Raiders needed only five plays to cover 59 yards, highlighted by a 37-yard Pratcher burst down the visitor sideline on the second play. He punched the ball over the goal line from six yards out on his fourth-consecutive carry to close the gap to 21, 28-7, at the 11:47 mark. The Ragin' Cajuns countered with another touchdown on their next possession. Gautier sandwiched a pair of Harris runs with two passes, including the scoring strike of 39 yards to Lawson, pushing their lead to 35-7 with 10:22 remaining in the third quarter. Louisiana increased its margin to 31, 38-7, after a 38-yard field goal by Brett Baer with 1:44 to play in the third quarter. After throwing an incompletion on his first throw, Gautier completed his next five passes as the Ragin' Cajuns reached the 21-yard line before being stopped four yards shy of another first down. Middle Tennessee then began another march towards the end zone. Kilgore connected on a 24-yard pass to Kyle Griswould for his longest completion of the game to that point just before the third quarter ended. Another two plays started the fourth before Kilgore located Beyah at the front right pylon for a 14-yard touchdown with 14:14 left to close the score to 38-14. However, the Louisiana offense continued to push forward and it was not satisfied with the 24-point lead. Backup quarterback Chris Masson came into the game and completed a 24-yard pass to Harry Peoples to start a drive and lead his team down to the Blue Raider 24-yard line before turning it over to Harris. The rusher capped the possession with three-straight rushes, including a back-peddling stepping carry along the sideline for a touchdown from four yards out. His score made it a 45-14 game with 5:43 to play. Middle Tennessee managed one last touchdown before the game ended. Kilgore started the drive with a 14-yard strike to Beyah, and after an incompletion, hit the receiver again for a 17-yard gain to the UL 24. Once inside the red zone, Griswould took a handoff the remaining 13 yards for the score

at 2:33. A pair of two-point conversion tries, the first negated by penalty, both failed and it left the Blue Raiders trailing 45-20. Louisiana then ran out the clock to clinch the road victory and lift it to its most single-season victories since 1993. Middle Tennessee will be back on the road for its next two games, starting at 6 p.m. Central Saturday in Knoxville, Tenn., against SEC foe Tennessee in the final non-conference contest of the campaign. **Middle Tennessee Postgame Notes:**

**BEYAH CLIMBS RECEPTIONS LIST:** Senior Malcolm Beyah registered seven receptions against UL to run his career total to 109. The 109 receptions moved him past Cleannord Saintil for eighth place on the all-time list and into a share for seventh with Hansford Johnson (1998-2001).

**GENDREAU PASSES PETRILLI:** With two points against UL, senior Alan Gendreau became Middle Tennessee's all-time leading scorer among kickers. Gendreau, who now has 281 career points, surpassed Garth Petrilli for the record. Petrilli had 280 points from 1991 to 1994.

**BEYAH MOVES TO 7TH:** With 86 receiving yards against UL, Malcolm Beyah moved past George Dykes for seventh place on the Blue Raiders' all-time list. Beyah now has 1459 career receiving yards and is chasing Vince Parks in sixth place (1,558 yards).

**TURNOVERS HURTING MT:** Middle Tennessee struggled with turnovers in 2010 and seems to be having the same problem in 2011. After having seven turnovers in its first four games, MT has had nine giveaways over its last three outings. Last year, MT had 38 miscues.

**KILGORE ON THE GROUND:** Sophomore QB Logan Kilgore set his personal-best in rushing against UL with 66 yards on eight attempts. Kilgore's previous high in rushing was 19 yards against both Purdue and Georgia Tech.

**QUICK HITTERS:** The Blue Raiders trailed 21-0 at the half and have not had a halftime lead at home since Nov. 27, 2010 vs FAU (14-7) … LB Leighton Gasque recorded his fifth sack of the season in the second quarter … OL Mike Williams made his team-leading 43rd start tonight … Alan Gendreau, Sancho McDonald, Mike Williams and Derrick Crumpton all played in their 45 games tonight … UL scored on its opening drive of the second half and it marked the third time an opponent has done that this season against MT (GT and Troy) … William Pratcher's 37-yard run in the third quarter marked the longest of his career … William Pratcher scored his third rushing touchdown of the season in the third quarter (he has one TD in each of his last two games) … WR Malcolm Beyah hauled in his sixth touchdown pass of the season to equal his career best … Beyah now has 14 career TD grabs to rank 8th on the all-time list … QB Logan Kilgore recorded his 7th career 200-yard passing game tonight .

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