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## Blue Raiders Heading Back to Bayou Country

MT Media Relations

The state of Louisiana has been good to the Blue Raiders this season.

First, it was a 38-20 victory over Louisiana-Monroe on Sept. 22. A week later, MT went back to the bayou to hand Louisiana-Lafayette a 26-9 loss. Both games helped MT to their quick 5-0 start and helped establish them as the premiere squad in the Sun Belt.

Saturday night, the Blue Raiders travel to Louisiana for the third time this season and hope to snare one of the biggest fish in the state, if not the nation, in LSU. Although a non-conference opponent, MT can go a long way in establishing itself as a David to the rest of the country's Goliaths' with an upset of the traditional powerhouse.



"They have talent and are really a top 25 team," said MT head coach Andy McCollum. "Let's go down there and fight and scratch. They're a well coached team and they play very well at home. When you look at the schedule and see that you're playing LSU at LSU then you know it's going to be tough. Let's go play one of the top teams in the country. We've got a good team too. We've won seven games. We'll play hard and throw it out there and see if we can shock anybody. We're going to put our talent up and see where we stand. They've got weapons everywhere."

The Blue Raiders face their third SEC team of the season on Saturday when they kickoff at 7:07 PM at Tiger Stadium. (MT)

And those weapons have posted some mighty big numbers in the last few weeks. LSU's offense has become to the Southeastern Conference what MT's is to the Sun Belt. Last week against Alabama, the numbers recorded by quarterback Rohan Davey and receiver Josh Reed were astounding. Against the Tide, Davey threw for a whopping 528 yards as the Tigers ripped -Bama 35-21 in a game where the final score was closer than the outcome.

But what's more astounding is that given the fact Davey's numbers were one of the best one-day totals the SEC has ever seen, he wasn't even named as the SEC's Offensive Player of the Week. His receiving partner Josh Reed was.

Reed shattered the LSU record and set a new SEC record as he caught 19 passes for 293 yards and a touchdown. The performance helped the Tigers edge over the 300 yards per game passing mark.

"It was an outstanding performance," said LSU head coach Nick Saban of both his quarterback and star receiver. "We had some outstanding individual performances in the game. Obviously Josh is the SEC Player of the Week and Ro (Davey) had a phenomenal day throwing the ball."

The Blue Raiders come in to the contest with a not-so-bad performance of their own under their belts. Returning to the early days of the 2001 campaign, MT ran rough-shod over Arkansas State last weekend to earn a share of this year's Sun Belt championship. At 7-2 on the year and with already one win over an SEC school, the Blue Raiders have earned a reputation - dangerous.

"They probably don't have the respect they deserve," said Saban. "They put some big numbers up with almost 500 yards a game offensively and they use the no-huddle, Tulane-style offense. It really features their best players, which are their backs and their quarterback."

The Blue Raider backs, composed primarily of tailback [Dwone Hicks](#) and utility back [Reshard Lee](#), have helped MT post 234 yards rushing per game. Quarterbacks [Wes Counts](#) and [Jason Johnson](#) are tossing for 253 yards per game and it has all helped the Blue Raiders put up 488 yards of total offense per contest.

But, although the MT offense has seen more headlines on the year, it was the defense that broke through last weekend, holding Arkansas State to a lone touchdown.

"We knew defensively we had to have our best performance of the year to win and keep Arkansas State out the end zone," said linebacker [Scotty Brown](#). "LSU is a big challenge for us defensively, but we won't back down. We're not going down there to lose. We have been well-prepared and just didn't play well on the road against some of the other big teams. Their quarterback is a great athlete and we have to contain them. We want to go out and represent the Sun Belt Conference and play like we have the last two games."

But the last two games have been at MT. And a homecoming game (MT's third time to be a homecoming opponent this season) on the road at one of the most hostile environments in the country is another story.

"It's one of the loudest stadiums in the country," said OL [Brandon Westbrook](#). "Our offense is fast-paced and audibling at the goal line may be tough. But as long as we have the play and know who we're blocking, I think we'll be OK. We've been looking for

everything to come together, and I think we've done that the last couple of games."

Kickoff at Tiger Stadium is scheduled for 7:07 PM and the game will be shown locally on WSMV TV 4 (Satellite coordinates for the game are GE 2, Transponder K3 (vertical)).

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