Turnovers, early deficit doom Blue Raiders

MT returns home next Saturday

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MONROE, LA – A huge early deficit and three turnovers were too much to overcome as Middle Tennessee dropped a 42-14 decision on the road at Louisiana-Monroe before a crowd of 11,987 at Malone Stadium. It was the Blue Raiders' first loss at Malone Stadium since 1999 and the first time a Rick Stockstill coached team has fallen to the Warhawks in six years.

Quarterback Logan Kilgore completed 21 of 30 passes for 148 yards, two touchdowns and an interception, while Tavarres Jefferson paced all receivers with nine catches for 74 yards and a score. Kyle Griswould turned in a personal-best seven receptions for 99 yards.

Benny Cunningham made his return to the lineup and led the Blue Raiders on the ground with 53 yards on 15 carries, while William Pratcher added 43 yards. D.D. Kyles also returned from an injury to gain 36 yards.

Defensively, linebacker Gorby Loreus led the Blue Raiders with a career-best 12 tackles, while safety Eric Russell and linebacker Darin Davis added nine stops each.

ULM was led by Jyruss Edwards' 191 rushing yards and three touchdowns, while quarterback Kolton Browning completed 15 of 18 passes for 193 yards and two scores.

Cameron Blakes and Jason Edwards led the Warhawk defense with 12 tackles apiece.

ULM returned the opening kickoff to the Blue Raider 38-yard line and scored in six plays to take a

quick 7-0 lead when quarterback Browning ran in from 3-yards out. Following a fumble by Andrew Banks on the Blue Raiders' opening possession, the Warhawks found the endzone again in just six plays when Edwards scored on a 17-yard run to put ULM up 14-0.

Middle Tennessee (2-7; 1-4) went back on offense and Kilgore was picked off by Vincent Eddie for the Blue Raiders' second turnover in as many possessions.

ULM took over at its own 43-yard line and promptly went 57 yards in 13 plays that was capped by a 12-yard touchdown pass from Browning to Brent Leonard to take a 21-0 lead. The Blue Raiders were forced to punt on its next possession and the first quarter ended with ULM owning a commanding 21-0 advantage.

The Warhawks (3-7; 2-4) opened the second quarter like they did the first, going 85 yards in just five plays to reach the endzone for the fourth straight possession. Browning connected with Je'Ron Hamm on a 50-yard heave to give the Warhawks a 28-0 lead.

ULM increased its lead to 35-0 on its next possession when Edwards raced 41 yards into the end zone to cap a 65-yard drive.

The Blue Raiders broke a five quarter scoreless streak late in the second quarter when Kilgore hit Sancho McDonald from 19 yards out to make the score 35-7 with 3:45 left in the half. It was Kilgore's 17th touchdown pass of the season which tied him for third on the single-season list with Wes Counts.

After a defensive stop, the Blue Raiders took over at its own 42 with 1:47 left in the half and drove to the ULM 12-yard line before being stopped on downs to end the first half.

Middle Tennessee opened the second half by going 64 yards in seven plays and Kilgore finished it off with a 14-yard touchdown pass to Jefferson to make the score 35-14 ULM. It was Jefferson's first touchdown of the season and the fourth of his career.

After trading turnovers, the Warhawks found the end zone once again when Edwards scampered 31 yards to give the home team a 42-14 lead with less than four minutes to play in the third quarter. It was Edwards' third rushing touchdown of the game.

The Blue Raiders will return home for a two-game stand beginning next weekend against Sun Belt Conference leader Arkansas State. Kickoff for the MT-ASU game is set for 2:02 PM and will be shown live on ESPN3.com.

KILGORE PASSES COUNTS: With two touchdown passes against ULM, quarterback Logan Kilgore ran his season total to 18. The 18 touchdown passes moved Kilgore past Wes Counts (17 in 2001) for third most in a single season. Kilgore now has 21 TD passes for his career.

JEFFERSON FINDS END ZONE: WR Tavarres Jefferson, the team's second leading receiver, found the end zone for the first time this season when he scored in the third quarter. Jefferson took a short pass from Logan Kilgore, shook off a tackler and jumped into the end zone for his fourth career touchdown reception. Jefferson finished the game with a career-high nine receptions.

MCDONALD GETS 100: WR Sancho McDonald became the 12th receiver in school history to reach

the 100-catch mark when he grabbed three passes for 28 yards against ULM. The senior now has 102 career receptions to rank 11th on the all-time list at MT. McDonald's second quarter TD was the 11th of his career.

2,000: With 148 passing yards today against ULM, quarterback Logan Kilgore went over the 2,000-yard mark for the season. Kilgore becomes just the ninth player in school history to have 2,000 or more yards passing in a single-season. Kilgore now has 2,042 yards on the season.

LOREUS GETS BLOCK: LB Gorby Loreus recorded the first blocked kick of his career when he rejected a ULM punt in the third quarter. It marked the fifth blocked kick of the season for the Blue Raiders and the 25th in 72 games under Rick Stockstill. Loreus is the fifth player this season to register their first career blocked kick.

CUNNINGHAM, KYLES MAKE RETURN: Running backs Benny Cunningham and D.D. Kyles made their return to the football field against ULM. Cunningham had missed the last four games due to a broken foot suffered in the Memphis game while Kyles has been out the past three games due to a knee injury. Cunningham finished with 53 yards rushing and three receptions, while Kyles added 36 yards on the ground.

QUICK HITTERS: WR Kyle Griswould hauled in a career-high seven receptions for a personal-best 99 yards … OL Mike Williams made his 45h career start today to lead all current Blue Raiders … OL Brandon McLeroy did not start today due to a shoulder injury and broke a streak of 12 straight starts … LB Darin Davis made his team-leading 22nd straight start today … Arness Ikner recovered his second fumble of the season in the third quarter … WR Harold Turner returned after a 3-game absence due to an ankle injury … LB Gorby Loreus had a career-high 12 tackles.

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