Blue Raiders travel to in-state foe Austin Peay for Saturday contest

MT will meet Governors in rematch of season-opener

November 25, 2011 · Athletic Communications

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - The Blue Raider men's basketball team returns to action on Saturday in a rematch of the season-opener against Austin Peay. MT will try to complete the season sweep when it makes the trip to Clarksville, Tenn., for a 7 p.m. CT contest at the Dunn Center. **GAME INFORMATION**
Time: 7 p.m. CT
Location: Clarksville, Tenn.
Facility: Dunn Center

MEDIA INFORMATION
Radio: WGNS (1450 AM, 101.9 FM, 100.5 FM)/WNSR (560 AM)/WMOT (89.5 FM)
Play-by-Play: Jonathan Hutton
Analysis: Kyle Turnham
Live Audio: Available here
Live Stats: Available here

SERIES INFORMATION
Overall: Middle Tennessee leads, 74-63
Current Streak: MT, 1 game
Last meeting: MT 80, AP 71 (11/11/11 in Murfreesboro, Tenn.)
Last meeting in Clarksville: AP 64, MT 63 (OT) (12/20/06)
Last MT win in Clarksville: MT 74, AP 70 (12/30/04)
Longest MT streak: 9 games (1951-56) // Longest AP streak: 4 games (4x, last 1976-77)
Noteworthy: Prior to MT's win over Austin Peay in this year's season-opener, the Governors had won three straight and six of the last eight over the Blue Raiders.

SCOUTING THE GOVERNORS

Although Austin Peay was picked to win the Ohio Valley Conference prior to the start of the season, the Governors have struggled out of the gate this season with an 0-6 start. Austin Peay nearly picked up its first win Wednesday, taking Detroit to overtime, but fell just short in a 94-93 loss despite TyShwan Edmondson's 22 points. Edmondson, an All-OVC First Team selection last year, has been the team's leading scorer in four contests and tops the team with 14.3 points per game, while Josh Terry is nipping at his heels with 14.2 points per game. As a team, the Governors are shooting 41.4 percent from the field, but just 26.1 percent from beyond the arc. **ALL ABOUT MT**

Nation Taking Notice

In the latest AP poll, the Blue Raiders were listed among those receiving votes. MT received two votes for the Nov. 21 edition of the poll. **Statistically Sound**

The Blue Raiders currently top the Sun Belt in four statistical categories. MT's field goal percentage (.528), 3-point field goal percentage (.438), scoring margin (+15.8) and assists per game (16.7) currently rank first in the league. MT also ranks as one of the best shooting teams on the national level. According to ESPN.com's statistical rankings, the Blue Raiders 52.8 shooting percentage ranks seventh in the nation. **Starting It Off Right**

The Blue Raiders got off to a 4-0 start this season, marking the first 4-0 start since the 1994-95 season. It also marked the first time in program history MT defeated three Division I opponents to open the season. The 5-1 start for MT is the best since 1987-88 when the Blue Raiders also started 5-1. A 6-1 start would be the best since 1986-87 when MT started 7-1. **Davis Nearing Record**

Head coach Kermit Davis is on track to become the winningest coach in MT history. Davis is six wins shy of matching former coach Jimmy Earle's 164 all-time coaching victories. This season, Davis joins Earle, who spent a decade guiding the Blue Raiders, as the longest tenured coaches in program history. **Playing Extra**

MT and Belmont played into double overtime on Nov. 20, marking the first overtime game of the season for the Blue Raiders. Last season, MT played four overtime games, including one double-overtime contest, ironically, a loss to Belmont on Dec. 7, 2010. The two contests against Belmont are the only double-overtime games for the Blue Raiders since a triple overtime loss to New Mexico State in 2002. **Shooting the Lights Out**

MT's shooting performance against UCLA on Nov. 15 was one for the ages. The Blue Raiders smashed the school record, shooting a 71.4 percent clip from the field and surpassing the previous mark of 68.9 percent set in 1981. MT has now had four halves of basketball this season shooting 70 percent or better:

11/22 vs Cumberland 2nd half: 75.0%
11/15 vs. UCLA 2nd half: 72.0%
11/15 vs. UCLA 1st half: 70.8%
11/11 vs. Austin Peay: 70.0%

On record, the Blue Raiders had only bettered the 70-percent mark in one half three times in program history prior to this year:

.833 vs. Akron (2/4/82)
.800 vs. Tennessee Tech (1/8/81)
.724 vs. Austin Peay (1/12/87)

Raining Three's

Not only did MT set a record from the field, but the Blue Raiders also hit a Sun Belt record 90.9 percent of their 3-pointers against UCLA. The mark, also a school record, surpassed the previous league record of 90.0 percent set by UAB in 1986 and is tied for fourth in NCAA history.

(Min. 10 made)
03/06/11 - 93.3%, Ohio State (14-15) vs. Wisconsin
12/03/00 - 91.7%, Drexel (11-12) vs. Delaware
12/11/04 - 91.7%, Northern Arizona (11-12) vs. Willamette
11/15/11 - 90.9%, Middle Tennessee (10-11) at UCLA
02/01/88 - 90.9%, Duke (10-11) vs. Clemson
01/16/93 - 90.9%, Hofstra (10-11) vs. Rhode Island

And One More Thing
MT hit its first nine treys and finished 10-of-11 from beyond the arc against UCLA. The Blue Raiders didn't miss a trey until 1:39 to go in the game. Before the streak ended, MT's 9-for-9 performance matched an NCAA record for highest perfect 3-point field goal percentage in a game, set by Minnesota against Penn State on Jan. 11, 2009. **Spreading the Wealth**
MT's 10-of-11 3-point performance against UCLA was far from a one-man show. In fact, it was a six-man show. Six different Blue Raiders hit a triple, led by Raymond Cintron and Bruce Massey, who each went 3-for-3. In addition, five Blue Raiders scored double-figures. Altogether, nine Blue Raiders have had at least one double-digit performance this year. **It's Good to be 80**
With multiple scoring threats, it's no surprise MT has cracked the 80-point mark five times in the first six games. The Blue Raiders scored 80 or more only seven times all of last season. **Closing It Out**
MT consistently closed out its opponents early in five of the first six contests. The Blue Raiders never trailed in the final 29:30 against Austin Peay, 16:24 against Loyola Marymount, 27:31 against UCLA, 22:15 against UNCG and 39:12 againast Cumberland. This means out of the total 200 minutes in those contests, the Blue Raiders went 105:52 without falling behind, which is nearly 53 percent of the time. **Hammonds Stepping Up**
Sophomore guard Kerry Hammonds reached double-figures for the third time in his career with 11 points against Cumberland, including a 3-for-3 performance from beyond the arc. Hammonds also recorded career-highs in assists (5) and blocks (4). **Sulton Reigns**
Junior forward JT Sulton became the first Blue Raider to record a double-double this season, collecting 12 points and 11 rebound at Loyola Marymount. It marked the third double-double of his career, with his last coming against UALR (21 pts, 11 reb) in the 2011 Sun Belt tournament. Sulton has reached double figures in five out of six contests this season. **Dendy is Dandy**
After sitting out last season due to NCAA transfer rules, LaRon Dendy has made an immediate impact for the Blue Raiders. He netted 21 points in the season-opener against Austin Peay and was one rebound shy of a double-double, collecting nine boards. He notched his first double-double of the season at UCLA, collecting 16 points and 13 rebounds. He has also shown versatility on the court, ranking first on the team in scoring (15.5 ppg) and blocks (9) and third on the team with 15 assists and having hit a 3-pointer in five out of six contests. **Painting the Town Blue**
In five out of the first six games, the Blue Raiders have dominated their opponent in the paint. Altogether the Blue Raiders own a 206-130 advantage in the paint.
vs. Austin Peay: 38-16 (+22)
at LMU: 24-18 (+6)
at UCLA: 40-28 (+12)
vs. UNCG: 28-18 (+10)
vs. Belmont: 34-42 (-8)
vs. Cumberland: 42-8 (+34)

Tremendous Transfers

In addition to Dendy, three other transfers have seen considerable time for the Blue Raiders through six games: Chipola Junior College transfer Marcos Knight has started each contest. Knight is the team's second-leading scorer with 13.8 points per game points and tops the team with 7.0 rebounds per game. He posted his first career double-double with 17 points and 11 rebounds against Belmont. Knight became the third Blue Raider to post a double-double this season and has reached double-figures in five out of six contests.

Bruce Massey dished out a career-high eight assists against Belmont and leads the team with 25 assits this season. In addition, the Dodge City Community College transfer went 3-for-3 from beyond the arc against UCLA, marking his first 3-point attempts of the season, and scored a season-high 14 points. He made it back-to-back games in double figures with 11 against UNC Greensboro. He also reanks second on the team with 12 steals, one shy of Knight's 13.

Mississippi Gulf Coast Junior College transfer Raymond Cintron came off the bench and sank a pair of free throws in his first D-I contest against Austin Peay, then added his first D-I triple against Loyola Marymount. He heated up against UCLA, draining 3-of-3 treys to finish 4-for-4 from the field with 11 points. He followed that performance with a career day against Belmont, going 5-for-9 from 3-point land en route to a career-high 18 points. **Best in the Belt**
MT has been one of the most successful teams in the Sun Belt under Davis. The Blue Raiders lead the Sun Belt, along with Florida Atlantic, with 23 league wins over the past two seasons, finishing 10-6 last year and 13-5 in 2009-10. MT is the only team with double-digit conference victories in each of the past four years, earning 10 victories in 2008-09 and 11 in 2007-08. MT has been dominant on the road as well, collecting 40 conference road wins during Davis' tenure, making the Blue Raiders the winningest Sun Belt road team over the past nine years.

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