# Raiders fall to Panthers on Senior Day

## Travel to North Texas Saturday

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**MURFREESBORO, Tenn.** – Middle Tennessee's final home game of the 2011 season followed the pattern of recent games, in falling behind early and not being able to catch up. The Blue Raiders swapped field goals for touchdowns in the first half, trailing 14-6 at the break, then falling behind 28-6 at the end of three quarters before rallying to score twice in the final frame.

The Blue Raiders fell to the Panthers, 31-18 before a crowd of 10,227 at Floyd Stadium.

FIU drew first blood, scoring on their second possession of the first quarter, driving 84 yards in 14 plays, with Wes Carroll tossing a five-yard scoring pass to a wide-open Jon Faucher with 2:30 left in the quarter. Jack Griffin's extra point kick was good for a 7-0 FIU lead. The big play in the drive was a 37 yard pass from Carroll to Jacob Younger that put the ball on the MT 16 yard line.

In the second quarter, the Blue Raiders got their first score of the game on a 37-yard FG with 8:50 remaining in the half. FIU wasted no time in regaining the momentum, however, as T.Y Hilton returned the bobbled ensuing kickoff 77 yards to the Blue Raider three-yard line. Kendrick Rhodes scored on a one-yard run three plays later, and Griffin's extra point kick made the score 14-3 with 7:12 left in the first half.

At this point, QB Jeff Murphy led MT on a 59-yard drive in 12 plays to the FIU eight yard line, but Murphy's pass to Jamal Gray was incomplete, and Gendreau came on to kick his second FG of the

game to cut the Panther lead to 14-6 at halftime.

The six first-half points by Gendreau gave the senior placekicker the career scoring record for kickers in the Sun Belt Conference at 294, and tied him with ULL runningback Tyrell Fenroy for first place among all players.

FIU took control of the game in the third quarter, however, as special teams play and turnovers once again hounded the Blue Raiders. After a Nate Toulson punt was partially blocked, the Panthers drove 51 yards on seven plays to score on a 2-yard pass from Carroll to Hilton with 5:46 left in the quarter. Griffin's PAT kick was again good, FIU's lead was upped to 21-6.

On the 9th play of Middle Tennessee's next possession, Greg Hickman intercepted a Murphy pass and returned it to the MT 26-yard line from where FIU scored in three plays to give the Panthers a 28-6 lead at the end of three quarters.

Logan Kilgore replaced Murphy at QB for the Blue Raiders after the second FIU score, and threw an interception on the second play of the fourth quarter, but after the Raider defense forced FIU to give the ball back, Kilgore drove his team 96 yards in 13 plays for the Blue Raider's first touchdown of the game, a one yard run by Benny Cunningham. A Kilgore pass attempt for a two-point conversion failed.

FIU answered with a field goal to make it 31-12 before Kilgore again led his team on a lengthy drive (81-yards in 12 plays) with Reggie Whatley scoring from a yard out to make the score 31-18. Another try for two points failed.

Middle Tennessee outgained FIU in total offense, 393-324, and in passing offense (291-143). The Panthers won the battle on the ground, 181-102.

Kilgore (147) and Murphy (144) were almost dead even in passing yardage, as ten different receivers caught passes. Tavarres Jefferson caught six passes for 55 yards, while Kyle Griswould had 104 yards on only four receptions, including a game-long 47 yarder from Kilgore.

Cunningham was the leading rusher for MT with 20 carries for 65 yards, while Kendrick Rhodes led the Panthers with 117 yards on 20 carries.

Defensively, Eric Russell, Darin Davis and Rob Blunt had six tackles each. Davis, Kendall Dangerfield and Jimmy Staten had tackles for loss.

Middle Tennessee's loss was its fifth in a row, and dropped its record to 2-9 overall and 1-6 in the SBC. The Blue Raiders will close the 2011 season next Saturday at North Texas.

**GAME NOTES**

**11th:** Middle Tennessee registered its fourth 90+ yard scoring drive of the season when it went 96 yards in 13 plays in the fourth quarter. Under Rick Stockstill, the Blue Raiders now have 11 scoring drives of 90 or more yards. Tonight's 96-yard drive matches the third longest under Stockstill.

**MCDONALD IN TOP 10:** Senior wide receiver Sancho McDonald put his name in the top ten list at MT in both receptions and receiving yards today against FIU. McDonald had two catches for nine yards to run his career totals to 106 receptions and 1,268 yards. He is currently tied for ninth in

career receptions and ninth in total receiving yards.

**GAMES PLAYED:** Seniors Alan Gendreau, Sancho McDonald, Mike Williams, and Derrick Crumpton all played their 49th career game today which ties for the fifth most in school history. If they all play next week at North Texas, the 50 games would tie for second all-time.

**GENDREAU OWNS SBC RECORD:** With six points today, senior place-kicker Alan Gendreau became the Sun Belt Conference's all-time leader in points scored by a kicker. Gendreau, who now has 294 total points, broke the previous mark of 288 points set by Arkansas State's Josh Arauco from 2006 to 2009. Gendreau also tied ULL's Tyrell Fenroy for the league's all-time scoring record of 294 points and needs just one more point in the final game next week to be the all-time leader.

**QUICK HITTERS:** Middle Tennessee started its fifth different combination this year along the offensive line and the third in the last four games … Offensive linemen Isaiah Anderson and Micah James made their first collegiate starts today … Eric Russell's 38-yard punt return was the longest of his career and the longest by the Blue Raiders since Patrick Honeycutt recorded a 47 yarder during the 2009 season … Alan Gendreau's two second quarter field goals went down as his 45th and 46th of his career … WR Shane Blissard equaled his career-high with five receptions.

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