

Blue Raiders prepare to face Tennessee State Thursday

Tipoff slated for 7 p.m. CT in Nashville

November 30, 2011 · Athletic Communications

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

The nation's top shooting team returns to the hardwood Thursday as the Middle Tennessee men's basketball team will take on Tennessee State at the Gentry Center. Tipoff between the Blue Raiders and Tigers is slated for 7 p.m. CT. **GAME**

INFORMATION

Time: 7 p.m. CT

Location: Nashville, Tenn.

Facility: Gentry Center

MEDIA INFORMATION

Radio: WGNS (1450 AM, 101.9 FM, 100.5 FM)/WNSR (560 AM)/WMOT (89.5 FM)

Play-by-Play: Chip Walters

Live Video: Available [here](#)

Live Audio: Available [here](#)

Live Stats: Available [here](#)

SERIES INFORMATION

Overall: MT leads, 33-16

In Nashville: MT leads, 12-8

Under Coach Davis: MT leads, 3-0M

Current Streak: MT, 5 games

Last meeting: MT 65, TSU 58 (12/29/10 in Murfreesboro, Tenn.)

Last meeting in Nashville: MT 67, TSU 57 (12/31/05)

Longest MT streak: 10 games (1984-89) // Longest TSU streak: 6 games (1993-95)

Noteworthy: MT has won 10 of the last 11 meetings with TSU.



SCOUTING THE TIGERS

Tennessee State (3-4) has had an up and down season thus far, losing back-to-back contests to open the season then picking up back-to-back wins. During the span, the Tigers played a pair of

close contests, dropping a 52-49 loss to WKU on Nov. 14 before edging South Carolina on the road on Nov. 20. TSU played another close one against Mississippi Valley last Friday, falling, 90-89 in double overtime. In fact, four of TSU's games have been decided by five points or less. In their last outing the Tigers knocked off Morgan State, 69-64, on Saturday. Robert Covington leads the Tigers with 16.9 points and 7.1 rebounds per game, while Patrick Miller also is averaging double-figures at 10.1 points per game. **ALL ABOUT MT**

Statistically Sound

MT is currently one of the hottest offensive teams in the nation, leading the country in field goal percentage (.545) and ranking in six other team categories according to ESPN.com.

Field Goal Percentage: 1st (.545)

Points: 5th (568)

Assists: T-5th (118)

Field Goals Made: 6th (200)

3-Point Percentage: 11th (.445)

Assists Per Game: T-23rd (16.9)

Points Per Game: 31st (81.1)

Nation Taking Notice

The Blue Raiders were listed among those receiving votes in the third week of the season. MT received two votes for the Nov. 21 edition of the poll. **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 6-1 start for MT is the best since 1986-87 when the Blue Raiders also started 7-1. **Davis Nearing Record**

Head coach Kermit Davis is on track to become the winningest coach in MT history. Davis is five 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. **Keeping Up with the Jones'**

Both Shawn and Jason Jones have played key roles for the Blue Raiders this season. Shawn has had three double-figure games, including 13 points on a 6-of-6 performance in the last outing against Austin Peay. He ranks 24th nationally with a .659 shooting percentage, according to ESPN.com, and also ranks second on the team with nine blocks. After missing the first four games, Jason has since produced two-double figure games in three appearances. He also has chipped in five assists and three steals. **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 six times in the first seven 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 six of the first seven 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 against Cumberland. At Austin Peay, MT led for the entire contest. This means out of the total 240 minutes in those contests, the Blue Raiders went 145:52 without falling behind, which is nearly 61 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 seven 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 (15.1 ppg) and blocks (11) and third on the team with 16

assists. **Painting the Town Blue**

In six out of the first seven games, the Blue Raiders have dominated their opponent in the paint.

Altogether the Blue Raiders own a 240-153 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)

at Austin Peay: 34-23 (+11)

Tremendous Transfers

In addition to Dendy, three other transfers have seen considerable time for the Blue Raiders through seven games: Chipola Junior College transfer Marcos Knight has started each contest. Knight is the team's second-leading scorer with 14.1 points per game points and tops the team with 6.9 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 all but one contest.

Bruce Massey dished out a career-high eight assists against Belmont and leads the team with 27 assists 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. His 14 steals are tied with Knight for the team lead.

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.

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