

# Dendy, Sulton post double-doubles in Blue Raiders' rout of Akron

## MT off to best start since 1980-81

December 4, 2011 · Athletic Communications

### MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

LaRon Dendy and JT Sulton each posted a double-double for the Middle Tennessee men's basketball team as the Blue Raiders crushed the Akron Zips, 77-53, on Sunday afternoon at Murphy Center.

Dendy netted a game-high 19 points and grabbed 11 rebounds, while Sulton scored 16 points and collected 11 boards as they each produced their second double-double of the season. MT has won four in a row and is 8-1 on the season, marking the best start since the 1980-81 campaign when the Blue Raiders started 12-1. In addition to Dendy and Sulton, junior guard Bruce Massey and sophomore forward Shawn Jones each scored double-figures. Massey added 13 points to go along with two steals and an assist, while Jones tallied 10 points. The Blue Raiders shot better than 50 percent for the fourth-straight game, hitting 50.9 percent from the field, and held Akron to just 28.6 percent



shooting, a season-low for MT opponents. MT also out-crashed the Zips on the boards, 41-34, and forced 13 turnovers compared to the Blue Raiders' season-low eight turnovers. For Akron (3-4), Alex Abreu led the way with 14 points and Quincy Diggs added 10, while Nikola Cvetinovic grabbed a team-high 10 rebounds. Akron opened the game with a 5-0 run before Dendy netted four straight points for the Blue Raiders on a bucket and pair of free throws to cut the deficit to one. The five-point lead was the largest lead and only lead the Zips would have the rest of the game. Dendy made it six

points in a row with a fastbreak layup at the 15:18 mark, then MT took its first lead of the game when junior guard Jason Jones came up with a steal and threw ahead to Massey for the 10-9 lead. The 10-0 run continued with back-to-back baskets from J. Jones and Massey for the 14-9 advantage with 12:49 to play in the first half. J. Jones knocked down a triple and Sulton completed a three-point play to stretch the lead to 11 at 22-11 with 10:45 remaining before the break. The Blue Raiders continued the defensive pressure as they heated up offensively, holding the Zips to one field goal during an 11:41 stretch as they went on a 26-6 run. Dendy was fouled on a last-second shot heading into the break and made a pair of free throws to finish the half with 11 points and give MT a 37-24 halftime lead. Diggs opened the second stanza with a 3-pointer then knocked down a free throw, and Abreu made it back-to-back triples to pull the Zips within six at the 18:18 mark. The Blue Raiders sustained the Zips' 9-2 run and responded with a 10-2 run of their own, sparked by Massey's breakaway layup, to go up 47-33 with 13:22 to play. MT took a 17-point lead after S. Jones threw down a reverse dunk and was fouled. Although Jones missed the free throw, Sulton grabbed the rebound and laid it back up for a 52-35 lead with 11:18 to go. The Zips cut the deficit back to nine thanks in part to six consecutive free throws, but J. Jones knocked down a pair at the line to stretch the MT lead back to double-digits. The Blue Raiders built the lead back up to 15 on back-to-back jumpers from Sulton and J. Jones, then Dendy's free throw and jumpshot gave MT an 18-point advantage with 5:28 to go. Sulton's six straight points gave MT a 19-point lead with 3:41 remaining. Sulton knocked down four free throws and had a dunk during the stretch. Torin Walker's first bucket as a Blue Raider with 51 seconds remaining gave MT a 24-point lead, the largest of the game, and sealed the victory for MT. The Blue Raiders hit the road again for a midweek contest, traveling to defending Conference USA champion UAB on Wednesday. Tipoff is slated for 7 p.m. CT in

### Birmingham, Ala. Postgame Quotes

#### **Head coach Kermit Davis**

##### *Opening Statement*

"I was really proud of our team. Akron is a really good MAC team, they won at Mississippi State, they're favored to win the MAC championship, NCAA tournament team last year, and they are very well coached. "I was pretty proud of how we defended, holding a good offensive team to about 29%. Our turnovers were really cut down, and our 4's and 5's were just terrific. You get double-doubles from both LaRon and JT, and I thought Bruce (Massey) and Jimmy (Oden) had really good floor games. Jimmy gave us a big lift in the first half. It was a good performance, we shot over 50%, and that is hard to do against that team." *On attacking Akron in the paint*

"Our guys have watched (Zeke) Marshall, and he's a good player, and Cvetinovic is a good player. That is what we were going to try to do, get into their bodies, but again be smart, and it helped that Marshall got in foul trouble. It changes their team, but I thought that we had something to do with that with LaRon and JT so aggressive going to the rim." *On turnovers*

"We have worked on turnovers before, but the results have not always been this low. We do share the ball really well, and we just need to get shots at the rim. Today, we only had eight and that is a real good stat."

##### *On LaRon and JT working so well together*

"I think that is another sign of our team. I thought Dendy made a great play on the break to JT, made a great pass to Shawn Jones on the high-low dunk. There were a lot of possessions where we got three or four shots at the rim, and one where we didn't score it. But you still have to love our activity at the rim because in the end, you knew it would pay off." *On holding off Akron charges*

"We've got a lot of different guys that can score, and when you are willing to find the extra guy, the extra pass, and you've got guys coming off the bench that can score, we are a great offensive team

right now. "The stat we've spent more time on in the last two weeks is free throw shooting. And we are 19 of 33, so that is something we need to continue to work on, and we are working on that hours and hours every day." *On being off to best start since 1981*

"It's the old coach-speak, we are just taking them one at a time. I love all the attention it brings to our fans. It's great for your program, great for your fans to hear. But we, as a team, haven't really talked about it. We talked about how big this game was. ESPN took note of it, and that brings more attention to the game. And I think people all across college basketball know how good that team was." *On team's slow start in this game, down 9-4*

"Massey didn't come out with a lot of pop, we took Marcos out, who has been maybe our best player. He didn't come out with the physical toughness that he usually does. And that's the great thing about our team. We've got guys on our bench that can come out and make shots, and those guys in waves make us better. We talk about it before our games, 'Guys, we have nine or ten guys who can start.'" *On Shawn Jones*

"He came out firing today, and he's done that before. He's made pick-and-pop shots, he made a great high-low fill-up. Shawn has been playing terrific. He needs to be playing 25-27 minutes a game because his production for minutes played is phenomenal." **Junior forward JT Sulton**

*On spectacular dunk off of pass from Dendy*

"I just anticipated the pass, and I got it, and I tried to lead LaRon, but I saw the defense cut him off, and I just called for it, and we played as team and he threw it to me. "It is not just point guards feeding post players, it's everybody feeding everybody. We are not a selfish team, we like to see others score. We are proud when others score. If it's their night, we just keep getting them the ball, and when the defense starts collapsing, then we start moving it until we get open shots." **Senior forward LaRon Dendy**

*On team scoring*

"It all starts in practice. If you hit shots in practice, you'll hit them in games if you execute well. Today we executed, and we hit some good shots." *On competition among post players*

"There isn't any drop off when any of us come in the game, and that is what makes the competition. It's a good thing. We'll make a bet who gets the most rebounds, and we'll work hard getting rebounds. Like in the game when you'd see us fighting for the rebounds with each other - it's like that in practice, too.

---

*Printed on July 23, 2014*

*Original URL: <http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/57072>*