Quotes and Notes Following MT's win over UConn

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HICKS OVER 1,000 - AGAIN: For the second consecutive season, Dwone Hicks has rushed for over 1,000 yards. Hicks is the first Blue Raider to go over the 1,000-yard mark in back-to-back seasons since Kippy Bayless in 1994. Hicks is also only the fourth back in Middle Tennessee history to register consecutive 1,000-yard seasons (Mike Moore, Joe Campbell, Kippy Bayless). Hicks finished the season with 1,143 yards. **HICKS BREAKS SINGLE-SEASON MARKS:** Dwone Hicks broke his own single-season scoring record when he tallied 24 points in today's win over Connecticut. Hicks, who set the school mark a year ago with 126 points, finished the regular season with 148 points. **MOST TDs EVER:** With four touchdowns scored today, junior Dwone Hicks broke Middle Tennessee's career touchdown scored record by moving his career total to 48. The previous mark of 45 touchdowns was held by Joe Campbell who accomplished the feat from 1988-91. **HOME WIN STREAK STILL ALIVE:** The Blue Raiders extended their home winning streak to 11 consecutive games with today's win over Connecticut. The last time Middle Tennessee dropped a game at home was Nov. 13, 1999 against Central Florida. Also during this span, the Blue Raiders have won six straight at Floyd Stadium in the month of November. **COUNTS SETS SINGLE-SEASON RECORD:** Senior Wes Counts broke his own single-season pass completion record with a percentage of 72.6 this year. Counts was 188-for-259 in the passing department to break the previous record of 67.0 percent. **COUNTS ESTABLISHES RUSHING HIGH:** In his final home game, senior quarterback Wes Counts rushed for a career-high 122 yards on 10 carries. The Murfreesboro native was became the first QB at MT to rush for 100 yards since Marvin Collier in 1987. Counts' previous best was a 50-yard outing

at UAB in 2000. **MT BREAKS TOTAL OFFENSE MARK:** With 528 yards of total offense today against Connecticut, the Blue Raiders broke the single-season mark of 5,155 yards set by the 1990 team. Middle Tennessee finished with 5,295 yards of total offense for the year. **POINTS RECORD SET:** With 38 points today, the 2001 Blue Raiders broke the single-season team scoring mark of 387 points established by the 1994 squad. Middle Tennessee finished with 408 points on the season. **FOURTH BLOCK:** For the fourth time under Andy McCollum, the Blue Raiders blocked a kick when Kareem Bland partially deflected a Uconn field goal attempt in the first quarter. Under McCollum, Middle Tennessee has blocked two punts (Michael Woods vs Louisiana Tech in 2000, Chris Johnson vs ASU in 2001), an extra point (Kareem Bland vs UL-Monroe in 2001) and today's field goal by Bland. Bland's block against Uconn marks the third block of the 2001 campaign and the second for Bland. **WRIGHT GOES LONG:** Sophomore Kerry Wright returned a kickoff 86 yards for a touchdown against Connecticut, which was the longest by the Blue Raiders since Sulecio Sanford brought one back 99 yards at Illinois in 1998. It also marked the second kickoff return for a TD by the Blue Raiders this season, which is the most in one season by Middle Tennessee since the 1969 squad had two. Jamison Palmer returned one 74 yards for a score earlier this year against Idaho. **NEWSON GETS NO. 14:** Kendall Newson ended his Blue Raider career on a high note by recording his 14th career 100-yard receiving game. Newson registered seven catches for 114 yards in the win over Connecticut. It was Newson's fourth 100-yard game of the year. **QUICK HITTERS:** Middle Tennessee has now won 17 of its last 22 season finales and are a perfect 3-0 under McCollum - The Blue Raider senior class is now 22-21 during their careers - With today's win the Blue Raiders ran their record to 8-3 marking the first time they have won eight games in a season since 1994 - WR Kendall Newson extended his streak to 43 straight games with at least one reception - a school record - QB Wes Counts' 55-yard run in the first quarter was the longest of his career - OL Josh Willoughby made his first career start today at left guard - Walk-on Blake Rolan competed in his first collegiate game when he lined up with the kickoff return team today - The Blue Raiders are 7-2 all-time in the month of November under McCollum - David Youell ran his streak to 22 consecutive games with at least one reception - Brian Kelly's 22-yard field goal in the second quarter was his fifth straight made three-pointer and tied him with Kenny Nolan on the all-time field goals made list with 17 - Today's game was the 53rd of Wes Counts' career that he has played at Floyd Stadium dating back to his middle and high school days - Dwone Hicks topped the 100-yard rushing mark for the 13th time in his career, which ties Mike Moore for the fourth most in school history - LB Scotty Brown set a career-high in solo tackles with nine and equaled his personal best mark with two sacks - Middle Tennessee's 327 rushing yards today was a season-high - The 528 yards of total offense against Connecticut marked the sixth time this season the Blue Raiders have topped the 500-yard mark. **QUOTES**

MT Head Coach Andy McCollum

"I've never been more proud of a group of seniors and what they've done for this program and this university, with the adversity they've gone through, to win eight Division I games and go undefeated at home." "I got back to the New Mexico State game for the highpoint of the season. This staff loves working and these kids love working. I tell my coaches that if we go out enthusiastic and competitive, the kids will be enthusiastic and competitive. They reflect on our coaches." "Any win is a high point. The low point was the loss at North Texas. We didn't take care of business. I hope someone takes a look at this team and gives it the opportunity to play one more [game]. I'd love to see this team play one more [game]." "We came in as a staff and we knew we had two great receivers. We were either going to run the option or spread the field. We knew we didn't have the linemen to smash the field." "I couldn't be more proud of Wes Counts because he earned what he got this year. He finally came in and said, -I'm going to be the quarterback.' And Jason Johnson has shown great character to

realize what's going on. There's not a more important person to this program than Jason Johnson."
"This team won because of work ethic, discipline and a sense of urgency. I knew coming in that the coach before me was tough, and that I would have tough kids." **MT Player Tanaka Scott**
"We all wanted to come out in our last game and play well. Watching the UCONN quarterback warm-up we knew we were going to have to put pressure on him today. Coming out today and winning was really special for this team. We felt we did that as a team. Having back-to-back winning seasons, well, I always thought that was possible. Middle Tennessee comes out playing 100 percent win or lose. I am just proud Coach McCollum gave me a chance to play." **MT Player Kendall Newson**
"All week thinking about how this is my last game gave me an icky feeling inside. I came out today wanting to do well. I would go around looking in each of the senior's eyes and I couldn't believe I have been with these guys for four years. You just knew that as seniors we were not going to come out here today and lose at home. Catching a pass in every game was special for me. I just give thanks to the Lord and to Coach McCollum for having faith in me and giving me the ball." **MT Player Wes Counts**
"We moved the ball well up and down the field today, but at times we just couldn't make the plays at third down and two or fourth down and two. We kicked three field goals tonight, and that is the most field goals we have kicked in a while. As for me coming out and running the ball tonight, we had a good blocking scheme and were trying some different running plays. I was surprised UCONN came out running the ball against us, because we have proved as a team we are a tough defensive team against the run. Connecticut came in having success passing the ball and we sat on the sidelines wondering why they were trying to run it so much. As far as our season, it means a lot to me to know that I came in and helped a team that started at the bottom come up and have an 8-3 season this year, after just three years in NCAA Division I football." **Connecticut Head Coach Randy Edsall**
"We just got beat by a better football team, that's all there is to it. Very simply, they've got better athletes than we do. Next to Virginia Tech, this is the best team we've faced all year. I can see why they played teams like LSU and Ole Miss close. "I thought we could've made some plays early, but we couldn't because of Middle Tennessee. I thought at the end Coach McCollum showed a lot of class by taking a knee." "We got a running game going with Poole, and then he gets injured." "But you look at the score last year when I think it was 66-10, and the score this year, and I think we've shown some tremendous improvement. Give Middle Tennessee credit. They've got a lot of good athletes." "One of the things that happened to us today is that we weren't used to their speed and quickness. We tried to make some adjustments and see it and react to it, but we really couldn't. And that's something we can't emulate in practice and that makes it tough." "We're at a point now where we're guttin' it out and playing hard. We'll keep moving and keep getting there."

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