Blue Raiders Dominate UNC-Greensboro

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Middle Tennessee continued its surprising start, dismantling visiting North Carolina-Greensboro 74-58 in front of 2,270 at Murphy Center. William Pippen led the offensive attack with a season-high 25 points and also led all Middle Tennessee rebounders with six. Tommy Gunn netted 13 points while Iiro Tenngren and Lee Nosse added 11 each. MT got out to a quick start behind Lee Nosse, who scored six of the first seven Blue Raider points as his team shot out to a 15-8 lead in the first half. The Blue Raiders slowly built their advantage through the first half, taking a 17-point lead into the intermission following a 3-pointer from Eric Parham in the final seconds of the half. The Blue Raiders continued to build on their lead as they opened the second half with a 10-2 run to put the game away. However, the entire story of the game could not be told on the offensive end. The Blue Raiders tallied 12 steals and two blocks in a stifling defensive effort. The Blue Raiders were extremely active in the passing lanes, getting an impressive 15 deflections on the night as they continually disrupted the Spartans' offensive flow. UNCG, the team most pundits have chosen to win the Southern Conference, made an 11-3 run to try to get back into the contest, but a Pippen shot put the Blue Raider lead back to 20 with just over 10 minutes remaining to remove any doubt about the outcome. The Blue Raiders are 3-0 for the first time since the 1994-95 campaign, when the team started 4-0. The Blue Raiders will have a chance to equal that mark on Monday night in the team's first road test of the year against Belmont in Nashville. The Blue Raiders are slated to tip off at 7:15 at Municipal Auditorium in Nashville. **3-0 FOR WIEL:** Head Coach Randy Wiel and the Blue Raiders are off to a 3-0 start after today's win over UNC-Greensboro. It marks the first 3-0 start by Middle Tennessee since the 1994-95 squad went 4-0 to begin the year. **CAREER-HIGH NIGHT FOR PIPPEN:** Junior William Pippen set a career-high in scoring Saturday night to lead Middle

Tennessee to a big win over visiting UNC-Greensboro. Pippen, who has hit for double figures in two of MT's three games, recorded 25 points and six boards in leading the Blue Raiders. **LUCKY 13:** Sophomore Tommy Gunn has scored exactly 13 points in all three of Middle Tennessee's games this season and the result has been a 3-0 start for the Blue Raiders. Gunn matched his personal best with three three-pointers tonight on his way to 13 points. **MAKING SHOTS:** A key to Middle Tennessee's hot start has been shooting. For the second time in three games today, the Blue Raiders shot over 50 percent from the field when they connected on 52.9 percent against the Spartans. On the season, Middle Tennessee is shooting 52.7 percent from the field (97-184) compared to last year when it shot just 44.0 percent. The Blue Raiders have also connected on an impressive 41.0 percent of their shots from behind the arc (32-78). **TEAM BALL:** The Blue Raiders have made 97 shots this season in three games and 60 of them have been accompanied with an assist. That is a percentage of 61.9. In all, Middle Tennessee is averaging 20.0 assists per game this year compared to an average of 15.5 a year ago. **THIS -N' THAT:** Middle Tennessee has now hit at least one three-pointer in 161 straight games - D'Marius Wilkes had a season-high four steals against UNC-G - Iiro Tenngren recorded his 28th career double figure scoring game - John Humphrey failed to record a slam dunk for the first time in three games - Tommy Gunn has now scored in double figures for five straight games - Randy Wiel is now 73-75 at Middle Tennessee - The Blue Raiders have won the battle of the boards in three straight games for the first time since the last game of the 1998-99 campaign and the first two outings of the 1999-2000 season. **MT Head Coach Randy Wiel:**

"UNC-Greensboro is a very good team and I told the players if they let them come in and run their plays the way they wanted then they would dissect us. I have become less tolerant about mistakes with this team and expect them to come in and play to their ability." "I think the key to our offense is our defensive intensity. In the last two minutes of the game we slowed down our defensive intensity and I told the team I want them to be wide open on defense all the time." "I knew Greensboro would come in and be a team that would test us. We are 3-0 and all three games we have played have tested this team, and I think they have come out better prepared as a team." "William Pippen had a good game tonight. He plays the small forward position but he also provides a third long body to rebound. Right now I think our best three players are Tommy Gunn, Pippen and John Humphrey."

MT Forward William Pippen:

"We wanted to come out tonight and set the tone, because we didn't do that in the last game against IUPUI. I felt if we could come out and get an early lead we would be okay. If our defense is a major part of our game we will win the game, and I feel we proved that in this game. We have a couple of great point guards in D'Marius Wilkes and Eric Parham and they came out tonight wanting to push the ball and we have to be able to run the transition and keep up with them." **UNC-Greensboro Head Coach Fran McCaffery:**

"I was very impressed with this team. They are very deep and have a complete game with players who can hurt you on the inside and the outside. Our game plan was to come out and run, but they turned it around and ran the ball on us. When Middle Tennessee began their run they got up six to eight points and we didn't respond with a little run of our own and the lead just ballooned. "Lee Nosse really hurt us. We tried to double team him in the second half and he pulled back and shot the three."