

# Blue Raiders complete 17th practice; eye Saturday scrimmage

## Final open practice is Friday

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### STOCKSTILL ON THE TRUE

**FRESHMEN:** Head Coach Rick Stockstill has been very pleased with his freshman class during preseason camp and he feels like three or four could contribute immediately. Running back Jordan Parker, LB T.T. Barber, WR Terry Pettis, and DT Darius Bennett have all caught his eye.



"Parker has picked up the offense fast, is a physical runner, good in protection, and does a nice job catching the ball. Barber has had the benefit of a lot of reps due to injuries and has made the most of his opportunity. He is very explosive, seems to always be around the football, and has made a lot of plays during camp.

"Pettis is a big target who continues to improve but he still needs to adjust to the speed of the game and Bennett is a guy up front who may have a shot."

### FIVE QUESTIONS WITH ... OL JADAREIUS HAMLIN

Who is your favorite athlete? Mario Harvey, rookie with the Colts  
What song are you listening to the most on your iPod? R&B Music  
Who would represent the team the best on Dancing with the Stars? Arthur Williams  
What is the last movie you saw in the theater? Batman  
Where is your favorite place to eat in Murfreesboro? Genghis Grill

### SIX QUESTIONS WITH ... RB BENNY CUNNINGHAM

Who is your favorite athlete? Kobe Bryant  
What song are you listening to the most on your iPod? Lil Wayne  
If you could pick one person to follow you on twitter, who would it be? Barack Obama  
Who would represent the team the best on Dancing with the Stars? Dearco Nolan  
What is the last movie you saw in the theater? Batman  
Where is your favorite place to eat in Murfreesboro? Chef Wang's

## **SIX QUESTIONS WITH ... LB RODERIC BLUNT**

Who is your favorite athlete? Ray Lewis

What song are you listening to the most on your iPod? Reggae

If you could pick one person to follow you on twitter, who would it be? Omar McLendon

Who would represent the team the best on Dancing with the Stars? Craig Allen

What is the last movie you saw in the theater? Batman: Batman

Where is your favorite place to eat in Murfreesboro? Appleby's

## **THE BURNETTE BLOG: HALFWAY HOME** *by Chris Burnette*

The offense found its rhythm early in camp and continues to impress each day at practice. The amount of knowledge retained between spring practice and the time the players reported to camp has been special. From day one receivers have been running solid routes and the quarterbacks, for the most part, have been putting the ball in the right place. Logan Kilgore continues to run with the first unit and at times has been unstoppable. Deep passes and accurate throws have been somewhat of a norm for him throughout camp. Offensive Coordinator Buster Faulkner is coaching the guys hard and making sure the guy who is on the field will be able to control the offense.

The competition for the backup job continues at the halfway point in camp. Jeff Murphy has been leading the second unit, but Cameron Deen, a 6'4", 210 pound gunslinger has made his presence known. Deen has a big time arm and if he can get his touch under control just a little more, will push even stronger to solidify his spot as the number two quarterback. The depth in the backfield at running back is about as deep as a football team will be. There are four backs that are all capable of seeing playing time this fall led by senior Benny Cunningham. Cunningham missed a large part of the 2011 season due to injury but has recovered nicely and should carry the load for the Blue Raiders this season. Drayton Calhoun, William Pratcher, and Jordan Parker have also looked good so far in camp with big runs coming from all three of them and picking up the blitz in pass protection has been key as well.

The offensive line is gaining an advantage on opponents with the addition of co-offensive line coaches Matt Moore and Glen Elarbee. Being able to have two sets of eyes on the offensive line makes these guys that much more knowledgeable and tougher. Throughout the scrimmage last Saturday night the line opened big holes for the backs and continued to give the quarterback plenty of time in the pocket. If this group continues to grow, big things will be happening this season on the offensive side of the ball.

## **DEFENSIVE UPDATE**

**DE DEARCO NOLAN** (on the defenses new coaching realignment): "The first thing is better communication, second is being prepared, and third is toughness. We have to go out there hard-nosed every day. Even when we are fatigued, we still have to be tough enough to fight through it. We need to be physically and mentally tough in order to get off the field."

**CB KENNETH GILSTRAP** (on what's going on in practice): "We just got through with two-a-days, and everything is going well. We have our last scrimmage this weekend, and then our (Beanie Bowl), then we start preparing for McNeese State."

**LB LEIGHTON GASQUE** (on changes from last season): "From last year, there is a huge difference. We have developed better attitudes, leaders have stepped up like Craig Allen, Jimmy Staten, people that are ready to roll. And Jeff Murphy. He sacrifices himself every day just to try to come back from

a really bad knee injury. And we have a lot of young people coming up that are going to help. Coach Nix has really been hard on the defense, but he has simplified our plays which really frees us up. Teaching us how to make plays on the ball, what to go for, bringing out the aggression in the players, and a lot of toughness. We are a lot more confident than we were last year."

**NEXT PRACTICE:** The Blue Raiders will practice on Friday at 3:30 PM in what will be the final open practice of preseason camp.

**SEASON TICKETS:** 1-888-YES-MTSU OR GoBlueRaiders.com.

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