

# Blue Raiders use all-round effort in dominating win over Memphis

## MT notches most points since 2010

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**MEMPHIS, Tenn.** - Logan Kilgore threw over 250 yards and the defense forced four Memphis turnovers as Middle Tennessee routed the Tigers, 48-30, at Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium Saturday evening.

The Blue Raiders (2-1) totaled 439 yards en route to MT's second consecutive win over Memphis (0-3). Middle Tennessee capitalized on the Tigers' turnover woes and untimely penalties. The four takeaways were the most for the Raiders since forcing six against FAU last season. The 48 points were the most for MT since racking up 56 against Austin Peay in 2010.



For the second consecutive week and first time since 2009, the Blue Raiders limited their opponent to less than 100 rushing yards. Memphis was held to just 74 yards on 33 rushing attempts. Overall, Memphis totaled 399 total yards, 325 of which came from the passing attack.

Kilgore, a redshirt junior, completed 22-of-30 passes for 253 yards and two touchdowns. Wide receiver Anthony Amos notched his second straight 100-yard contest, snatching career-highs with nine catches for 128 yards.

MT used a balance rushing attack, posting 179 yards among eight tailbacks. Benny Cunningham led the Raiders with 57 yards on 11 carries and two touchdowns. Drayton Calhoun added a rushing touchdown, finishing the game with 38 yards.

Several Blue Raiders made huge plays on the defensive side of the ball. Khari Burke and Roderic Blount tied for a team-best seven tackles each. Both Blount and Burke picked up two fumble recoveries, while Blount also had two tackles-for-loss. Kendall Dangerfield forced two fumbles, while Kevin Byard ran back a pick six. The interception touchdown was the first for MT since 2010.

The first half provided a lot of fireworks as both teams combined for 44 points. Middle Tennessee used a 20-point second quarter to set the momentum.

To start the game, Middle Tennessee drove the field 75 yards and used a 12-yard pass from Kilgore to Christian Collis to put the Blue Raiders up by seven. Memphis' Jacob Karam fired a 63-yard pass to Marcus Rucker to put the Tigers in prime position. UM couldn't hit the end zone, but used a 38-yard field goal by Taylor Spurlock to narrow the Blue Raiders' advantage.

A strong drive down the field faltered when a Blue Raider fumble gave Memphis new life. UM's Karam connected with Rucker once again for 49 yards to put UM up, 10-7, with 14:52 left in the second quarter.

MT used a pair of Carlos Lopez field goals to take a 13-10 lead. The momentum started turning the tide when the Raiders' Byard intercepted his first career pass and ran 68 yards for the touchdown to put MT up by 10.

The Tigers' woes continued with another fumble as Blount recovered the fumble for MT. An unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on Memphis helped move the chains for the offense. Cunningham tallied his first touchdown this season on the next play with a six-yard run to put the Blue Raiders up 27-10. A fired up Memphis returned the kick 55-yards and eventually drove 42 yards to score a touchdown to narrow the deficit to 27-17 at the half.

Middle Tennessee tallied 264 total yards in the first half, including 195 yards from Kilgore. Memphis notched 224 yards on 36 plays, but committed three turnovers.

Memphis again had trouble holding the ball to start the second half. MT's Robert Hogg pounced on a loose Tiger fumble during the kickoff at the UM 29-yard line. Nine plays later, Cunningham added his second touchdown to give the Raiders a 34-17 advantage. Drayton Calhoun notched a touchdown to extend MT's lead to 41-17.

UM answered with a Jerrell Rhodes eight yard touchdown. Later in the fourth quarter, the Blue Raiders eclipsed 48 points as Collis corralled his second touchdown grab of the night. Memphis added one more TD in the final minutes of the game as Middle Tennessee improved to 4-1 against Memphis since the series revived in 2007.

The Tigers' Karam finished the contest with 26 completions, 325 yards and two touchdowns in the loss. Rucker grabbed 10 passes for 177 yards, while Keiwone Malone caught 10 for 102 yards. Rhodes was limited to 48 yards on 15 carries.

The Blue Raiders take a bye week next Saturday before visiting ACC foe Georgia Tech, on Saturday, Sept. 29.

## **1ST QUARTER**

Middle Tennessee used a methodical drive in the opening series to drive down 75 yards and score. Logan Kilgore connected to Christian Collis for a 12-yard touchdown to put the Blue Raiders up seven at 12:45. The touchdown grab by Collis was the first of his career. Memphis QB Jacob Karam fired a 63-yard pass to Marcus Rucker to put the Tigers deep in MT territory. The Tigers fumbled

twice in the red zone and were forced to use a Tyler Spurlock 38-yard field goal to get on the scoreboard. Memphis' Akeem Davis recovered a MT fumble at the Memphis 32 to re-energize the Tiger offense. The Blue Raiders racked up 153 yards, including 132 from the arm of Kilgore. Memphis combined for 98 yards, which included 98 from the quarterback Karam.

## **2ND QUARTER**

The second quarter proved to be eventful as a combined 34 points were scored. On the first play of the quarter, UM's Jacob Karam zipped a 49-yard pass to Marcus Rucker to put the Tigers up 10-7. The Blue Raider offense answered by driving 83 yards, but stalled once inside the five yardline. Carlos Lopez easily made a 19-yard field goal to tie the contest, 10-10. On the kickoff, Middle Tennessee's Khari Burke recovered his first career fumble at the Memphis 29-yard line. Again, Lopez came out to connect on a season-long 43-yard field goal to put MT back up by three. Kevin Byard intercepted a pass and ran 68-yards for the pick six to put up MT 20-10 at 6:17. The interception was the first for Byard and the pick six was the first for MT since Rod Isaac ran one back against ULM on Oct. 23, 2010. Memphis' turnover woes continued as Roderic Blount picked up the fumble recovery. Kendall Dangerfield was credited with the forced fumble, his second of the game. Middle Tennessee was aided by a Tigers unsportsmanlike conduct penalty to gain great field position. Benny Cunningham dashed in six yards to give MT the 27-10 lead with less than three minutes remaining. Memphis answered with 55-yard kick return from Bobby McCain. UM used a seven play drive that culminated with a Karam to Rucker 10-yard touchdown to narrow Memphis' deficit to 10. At the midpoint, the Blue Raiders had totaled 264 yards. Logan Kilgore was 16-of-22, for 195 yards and a touchdown. Anthony Amos led MT receivers with six catches for 95 yards. Benny Cunningham tallied six carries for 42 yards and a touchdown run. Karam completed 12 passes with an interception for 191 yards and two touchdowns at the break. Rucker had seven grabs for 146 yards for Memphis.

## **3RD QUARTER**

UM couldn't fight off the fumble bug as MT's Robert Hogg pounced on the pigskin to give MT the ball at the UM 29. Nine plays later, Benny Cunningham rushed in the end zone for his second touchdown to give Middle Tennessee the 34-17 edge. Later in the quarter, Middle Tennessee capitalized on a Memphis roughing the passer penalty to score. Drayton Calhoun capped off the drive with a two-yard scamper, as the Raiders took a 41-17 lead. The points were most for MT since notching 56 against Austin Peay in 2010. Memphis added another touchdown, capping off a six minute drive with an eight-yard touchdown rush by Jerrell Rhodes. Memphis trailed MT 41-23 at the end of the third.

## **4TH QUARTER**

Christian Collis grabbed a nine-yard catch from Kilgore to put the Blue Raiders up 48-23. The touchdown gave Middle Tennessee the most points at an opponent's field since totaling 48 against North Texas in 2007. Memphis added a one-yard touchdown from Carl Harris at 1:02 to finalize the game score of 48-30. The Blue Raiders held their second opponent to less than 100 yards rushing after forcing FAU to 96 last week and Memphis to 74 this week.

## **GAME NOTES**

**CAPTAINS:** Tonight's game captains were OL Josh Walker, DL Kendall Dangerfield, and P Josh

Davis.

**KILGORE TOPS 200:** Quarterback Logan Kilgore topped the 200-yard passing mark for the second time this season and the ninth of his career with 253 yards against Memphis. Kilgore currently ranks 7th all-time on the 200-yard passing list and needs three more to tie for 5th.

**AMOS CAREER-HIGH:** ... AGAIN: For the third straight game, senior receiver Anthony Amos set a personal-best. Amos established a career-best in receiving yardage with 128 yards and receptions with nine against Memphis. In the opener against McNeese he had 8 catches to establish a personal-best then had 102 receiving yards in the win over FAU to set his personal mark in that category.

**LOPEZ STAYS HOT:** Senior PK Carlos Lopez remained perfect on the season by connecting on a 19 yarder and a career long 43 yarder to go 5-for-5 to begin the season. Lopez also scored 12 points to set a new personal-high.

**BYARD TO THE HOUSE:** Redshirt freshman Kevin Byard recorded his first career interception in a big way against the Tigers. Byard took a Jacob Karam pass in the second quarter and returned it 68 yards for his first career TD. It marked the first interception returned for a touchdown by MT since Rod Issac had a 70 yarder against ULM on Oct. 23, 2010. It was also the Blue Raiders' first interception since Nov. 19, 2011 against ASU.

**BACK-TO-BACK:** The Middle Tennessee defense held the opposition to under 100 yards rushing for the second straight game by limiting the Memphis Tigers to 74 yards on the ground. MT was coming off a 96-yard effort in the win over FAU. The last time MT held an opponent in consecutive games to less than 100 yards rushing was during the 2009 season when it accomplished the feat against Louisiana and Arkansas State.

**NO SACKS:** Middle Tennessee did not allow a sack tonight against Memphis to remain tied for 1st nationally. The Blue Raiders have not given up a sack all season.

**QUICK HITTERS:** The Blue Raiders came out in their white jersey's and blue pants, a combination worn 26 previous times under Rick Stockstill ... QB Logan Kilgore started his 16th career game tonight which ranks tied for the most on the team with Tavarres Jefferson ... Middle Tennessee scored a TD on the opening drive of the game for the 18th time under Rick Stockstill ... WR Christian Collis recorded his first career touchdown reception in the first quarter ... WR Marcus Henry made his first Blue Raider start tonight ... Freshman LB T.T. Barber received his first collegiate start tonight ... Senior RB Benny Cunningham made his return to the lineup tonight after missing half of the McNeese game and all of the FAU contest ... Khari Burke registered his first career fumble recovery in the second quarter ... LB Roderic Blunt had his first career fumble recovery late in the second quarter ... Benny Cunningham scored his first and second TDs of the season in the second quarter and the 11th and 12th of his career ... MT's 20 points in the second quarter is the most points scored in one quarter since the Raiders put up 21 in the first quarter at FAU on Oct. 22, 2011 ... DT Kendall Dangerfield was credited with 2 forced fumbles ... Middle Tennessee's 48 points were the most scored in a game since putting up 56 against Austin Peay at home in 2010 and the most away from Murfreesboro since scoring 48 at North Texas on Oct. 27, 2007).

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