

Blue Raiders head to Savannah State for first road test

Tipoff slated for 6 p.m. CT

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

The Blue Raider men's basketball team will hit the road for the first time of the 2012-13 campaign, traveling to Savannah State for a 6 p.m. CT contest Tuesday at Tiger Arena.

GAME INFORMATION

Date: Tuesday, Nov. 13
Time: 6 p.m. CT
Location: Savannah, Ga.
Facility: Tiger Arena

MEDIA INFORMATION

Radio: WNSR (560 AM)/WMOT (89.5 FM)/ WGNS (1450 AM, 101.9 FM, 100.5 FM)

Play-by-Play: Chip Walters
[Live Audio](#) - [Live Stats](#)

Twitter: [@MTAthletics](#), [@MT_MBB](#)



SERIES INFORMATION

- Overall: First meeting
- Note: Tuesday's contest marks the Blue Raiders' first contest in Georgia since they traveled to Georgia Southern on Dec. 1, 1990. MT won the game, 80-77.
- Note: Savannah State ended last season with a loss at Tennessee in the opening round of the NIT. Ironically, it was MT that ended Vols' season with a 71-64 win at Tennessee in the NIT second round.

BLUE RAIDER FASTBREAK POINTS

- MT is one of seven schools in the country receiving votes or ranked in the ESPN/USA Today Coaches Poll in football, men's and women's basketball. It is the only non-AQ school in the

- mix, as Notre Dame, Michigan, Louisville, Georgia, Stanford and UCLA comprise the group.
- The 97 points against Alabama State in the season-opener marked the most since MT scored 109 against Houston Baptist on Feb. 13, 2010.
 - Jason Jones' 19 points on Friday were the most for him since scoring 21 against Troy on Feb. 17, 2011.
 - MT was unanimously picked to win the Sun Belt East Division this year by the league's head coaches.
 - Four Blue Raiders earned preseason all-conference honors. Marcos Knight was named to the first team, JT Sulton and Bruce Massey to the second team and Raymond Cintron to the third team.
 - Raymond Cintron was rated as the No. 39 shooter in the country according to CBSSports.com's Top 50 shooters.
 - MT received three votes in the preseason ESPN/USA Today Coaches Poll.
 - MT returns 10 of its top 12 scorers from last season.

SCOUTING SAVANNAH STATE

- Savannah State won their season-opener over Trinity Baptist, 84-62
- The Tigers shot 59.3 percent in the contest and were led by Rashad Hassan's 17 points
- SSU returns its entire squad from last year's NIT team that finished 21-12, including 14 letterwinners and all five starters
- Hassan led the Tigers last year with 13.0 points per game
- Arnold Louis was SSU's leading rebounder last year with 7.8 boards per game

SCOUTING MIDDLE TENNESSEE

- MT returns 10 of its top 12 scorers from last year's team that finished 27-7 and 14-2 in the Sun Belt, winning the league's regular season championship
- After finishing fourth in the country last year in field goal percentage (49.5%), MT opened the season shooting 48.5 percent against Alabama State
- Jason Jones currently leads the Blue Raiders with 19 points per game, while JT Sulton is the leader on the boards with 9.0 rebounds per game
- The Blue Raiders set a school record with 11 road wins last year and will endure their first test away from home this year at Savannah State

LAST TIME OUT

Senior forward Jason Jones was a perfect 9-for-9 from the field for 19 points, leading Middle Tennessee to a 97-53 victory over Alabama State in the season-opener at Murphy Center on Friday night. Senior guard James Gallman also reached double figures with 15 points thanks to his 5-for-7 performance from 3-point land. Tweety Knight scored nine points and collected a game-high five assists. Senior guard Bruce Massey matched Knight in the category as MT produced 27 assists on 33 baskets. Junior forward Neiko Hunter also had nine points, while senior forward JT Sulton neared a double-double with eight points and nine rebounds. MT finished the contest shooting 48.5 percent, including a 57.9 percent clip in the second half. The Blue Raiders limited the Hornets to 26.9 percent shooting in the second half and 36.2 percent for the game.

KEEPING UP WITH THE JONES'

After being hampered by a back injury throughout the 2011-12 season, senior guard Jason Jones

picked up where he left off from his sophomore season. Jones was a perfect 9-for-9 from the field and led the Blue Raiders with 19 points. As a sophomore, Jones led the team in scoring and rebounding with 13.7 points and 5.4 rebounds per game.

SOLID DEBUTS

Two key newcomers wasted no time making an impact in their Blue Raider debuts against Alabama State. Junior guard Tweety Knight earned the start and collected a game-high five assists to go along with nine points and three rebounds. Junior forward Neiko Hunter came off the bench for nine points, three rebounds, two assists and a block.

HIGH SCORING

The 97 points against Alabama State on Nov. 9 marked the most since MT scored 109 against Houston Baptist on Feb. 13, 2010. MT cracked the 90 plateau twice last season, scoring 90 against Austin Peay and 94 against ULM.

AMONG THE NATION'S ELITE

MT is one of just seven schools in the country with the football, men's and women's basketball teams each currently receiving votes or ranked in the ESPN/USA Today Coaches Polls. MT represents the only non-AQ school in the mix, as Notre Dame, Michigan, Louisville, Georgia, Stanford and UCLA are the only other schools to boast the accomplishment. Men's basketball received three votes in the preseason poll, the women's team received 28 votes in the preseason poll and football received two votes in the latest poll. The men's and women's basketball teams represent the only Sun Belt teams in their respective polls. It also marks the first time in Sun Belt history a school has had its football, men's and women's basketball teams receiving votes at the same time.

RECEIVING VOTES

On the heels a record-breaking season, the 2012-13 Blue Raider men's basketball team is already receiving recognition in the USA Today coaches' preseason poll. MT, the Sun Belt's only representative in the poll, received three votes after finishing 27-7 last season.

BLUE RAIDERS PICKED TO WIN EAST

MT was picked unanimously to win the Sun Belt's East Division according to the preseason coaches' poll released by the league on Oct. 24.

Four Blue Raiders were selected to the preseason all-conference teams, the most of any school. Senior guard Marcos Knight earned a first-team nod, senior forward JT Sulton and senior guard Bruce Massey were voted to the second team, and senior guard Raymond Cintron was named to the third team.

CINTRON RECEIVES RECOGNITION

Raymond Cintron was listed at No. 39 on CBSSports.com's Top 50 shooters for the 2012-13 season after hitting 43.2 percent of his shots from beyond the arc last season. The San Juan, Puerto Rico, native ranked sixth in the Sun Belt in 3-point shooting and was ninth with 2.0 treys per game. Overall, Cintron shot 45 percent from the field and averaged 8.4 points per game. Middle Tennessee will also face four shooters on the list throughout the 2012-13 season. Florida's Erik Murphy, Texas Southern's Omar Strong, Belmont's Ian Clark and Tennessee State's Robert Covington were listed among the top 50.

DENDY UPDATE

The regular season is underway for former Blue Raider LaRon Dendy. The 2012 Sun Belt Player of the Year has started every game for Kolossos this year and has helped the Greek team to a 3-2 record. The Greenville, S.C., native is currently the team's leading scorer, averaging 20.0 points per game.

SEASON TICKETS

Season tickets are on sale now for \$140, or purchase both men's and women's season tickets for \$199. Price includes a ticket to the Blue Raiders' game against the Commodores at Bridgestone Arena. To purchase, call the Blue Raider Ticket Office at 1-888-YES-MTSU or to buy online, click [here](#).

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2011-12

- MT won the Sun Belt regular season championship with a 14-2 league record.
- The Blue Raiders earned an NIT bid and made it the quarterfinals, knocking off Marshall and Tennessee in the first two rounds. It marked MT's first win in the postseason since 1989, the first win over the Vols since 1988 and the first win at Tennessee in program history.
- LaRon Dendy was named the 2012 Sun Belt Player of the Year and Kermit Davis earned the league's Coach of the Year honor. It was the first time MT received the Sun Belt's top player award, while the top coaching accolade was the second for Davis.
- Marcos Knight was named second-team all-conference and JT Sulton earned third-team honors.
- With MT's 71-66 win over FIU on Dec. 29, 2011, head coach Kermit Davis surpassed Jimmy Earle as MT's all-time winningest coach. It marked Davis' 165th MT victory, eclipsing Earle's mark of 164.
- MT's 27 wins and 14 league victories were both the most in program history.
- MT's 20-2 start was the best in program history, topping the previous mark of 18-2 in the 1974-75 season.
- MT's 10-0 league start was the best in program history. It topped the previous mark of 9-0 set in the 1974-75 season when the Blue Raiders were a member of the OVC.
- MT's 12-game winning streak from Dec. 10 through Jan. 26 was the longest in 26 years and is tied for the third-longest in school history.
- MT finished the season ranked fourth in the country in field goal percentage. The Blue Raiders shot 49.5 percent from the field.
- MT set a school-record with a 71.4 shooting percentage at UCLA on Nov. 15. The Blue Raiders shot 70.8 percent in the first half and 72 percent in the second half of the contest.
- The Blue Raiders' 11 road wins were the most in program history.
- MT had the sixth largest attendance increase in college basketball.

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