Blue Raiders return home to host Texas Southern Saturday

Tipoff slated for 6 p.m. CT following MT football game

November 23, 2012 · @MTAthletics

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - After playing the last three games on the road, the Blue Raider men's basketball team returns to Murphy Center on Saturday to host Texas Southern for a 6 p.m. contest following the Middle Tennessee football game against Troy.

GAME INFORMATION
Date: Saturday, Nov. 24
Time: 6 p.m. CT
Location: Murfreesboro, Tenn.
Facility: Murphy Center

MEDIA INFORMATION
Radio: WNSR (560 AM)/WMOT (89.5 FM)/ WGNS (1450 AM, 101.9 FM, 100.5 FM)
Play-by-Play: Chip Walters
Analysis: Kyle Turnham

Live Audio/Video/Stats

Twitter: @MTAthletics, @MT_MBB

SERIES INFORMATION
First Meeting
Note: This will be the fourth time the Blue Raiders have faced current TSU head coach Mike Davis, who spent the previous six seasons at UAB. During his tenure, the Blazers won three meetings against the Blue Raiders.

BLUE RAIDER FASTBREAK POINTS

- After starting last season 4-0 and with the 3-1 start this season, MT is off to its best back-to-back starts since the 1996-97 and 1997-98 seasons. MT started 3-1 in 1996-97 and 4-1 in

1997-98. A win on Saturday would mark the first time MT has started back-to-back season 4-1 or better since the 1986-87 and 1987-88 seasons. (1986-87: 5-0 start, 1987-88: 6-1 start)

- MT got off to a 2-0 start for the second year in a row, marking the first back-to-back occurrences since the 1995-96 and 1996-97 seasons.
- Shawn Jones posted his second career double-double against UCF on Tuesday with 18 points and 13 rebounds, both career highs.
- The 97 points against Alabama State in the season-opener marked the most since MT scored 109 against Houston Baptist on Feb. 13, 2010.
- 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.
- Marcos Knight scored a career-high 21 points in his home state of Georgia against the Savannah State Tigers on Nov. 13. It marked his 25th double-figure game and he currently has 27, scoring double figures in three of four games this season.
- MT returns 10 of its top 12 scorers from last season.

SCOUTING TEXAS SOUTHERN

- Texas Southern is coming off a 71-69 loss to Oakland at home
- The Tigers' only victory this season came against fellow Sun Belt member Louisiana, a 74-71 overtime win on Nov. 16
- TSU is 0-3 on the road this season
- The Tigers return seven letterwinners, including three starters, from a team that finished 15-18 last season
- The Tigers are led by Raymond Penn with 17.4 points per game and Fred Sturdivant with 8.4 rebounds per game

LAST TIME OUT

Shawn Jones' career day led the Blue Raiders to a 75-61 victory over UCF at UCF Arena. Jones posted his second career double-double with 18 points and 13 rebounds, both career-highs.Middle Tennessee's win snapped the Knights' 22-game non-conference home winning streak and marked their first loss of the season. The Blue Raiders finished shooting 50 percent from the field thanks to hitting 60 percent of their shots in the second half. They also owned a 33-31 rebounding advantage and had only eight turnovers while forcing UCF to turn the ball over 14 times.

While it was a back-and-forth contest through the first half, with UCF holding a 33-30 advantage at the break, MT's 20-4 run in the second half proved to be the difference in the game. Trailing 46-44 with 11:14 to play, it was a Cintron 3-pointer that put the Blue Raiders back on top for good. The Knights managed to tie it on the next possession, but Jones scored MT's next five points and the Blue Raiders held UCF scoreless over a 3:46 stretch during the onslaught.

HALFTIME ADJUSTMENTS

MT has taken advantage of making halftime adjustments this year. The Blue Raiders are averaging nearly 10 points more in the second half (39.0) than the first (29.8) and shooting 50 percent in the

second half compared to 38 percent in the first, including 50 percent from 3-point range in the second compared to 32.1 percent in the first. Opponents are shooting 36.5 percent in the second half compared to 46.3 in the first, with a difference in 3-point shooting of 27.6 percent in the second to 32.5 percent in the first.

BENCH PRODUCTION

With 10 of the top 12 scorers returning from last season's team, it's no surprise that MT has a deep bench. The Blue Raider bench currently owns a 144-55 advantage over its opponents.

OUT-REBOUNDING OPPONENTS

The Blue Raiders have out-rebounded their opponent in all four contests this season. MT currently owns a 147-129 rebounding advantage, an average of 36.8 compared to 32.2.

ONE-TWO PUNCH

Bruce Massey and Tweety Knight have already established themselves as a strong one-two punch at point for MT. Knight ranks first in assist-to-turnover ratio (2.6) in the Sun Belt, while Massey is second (2.2). Both are averaging 3.3 assists per game good for sixth in the league.

FOUR GAMES, FOUR LINE-UPS

Through the first four games, head coach Kermit Davis has used four different lineups. The only mainstay each game has been Shawn Jones. James Gallman and Bruce Massey have each made three starts, Marcos Knight, Kerry Hammonds, Neiko Hunter and Raymond Cintron each have two starts and Raymond Cintron, JT Sulton, Tweety Knight and Jacquez Rozier have started one game apiece.

A LITTLE HELP

After ranking 21st nationally in assists per game last year, MT's unselfishness has already been apparent in its first two games. The Blue Raiders had 27 assists on 33 baskets in the season-opener against Alabama State and through four games have 68 assists on 93 field goals, which means about 73 percent of field goals have come from an assist.

KEEPING UP WITH THE JONES'

Shawn Jones was a beast against UCF on Nov. 20. He posted his second career double-double with 18 points and 13 rebounds, both career-highs. He is also the only Blue Raider that has started every game this season and he has two double-figure scoring performances thus far.

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 in the season-opening win against Alabama State. 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.

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 3-3 record. The Greenville, S.C., native is currently the team's leading scorer and rebounder, averaging 17.5 points and 5.0 boards per game.

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.

Printed on May 19, 2013
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/64163