Blue Raiders Drop Squeaker, 66-64

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EDINBURG, Texas - Homestanding UT-Pan Am scored seven straight points in a two-minute stretch in the final minutes to break a tied contest and defeat Middle Tennessee, 66-64, Saturday evening at the UTPA Fieldhouse. The two teams were tied at 56 with 3:54 remaining in the game after UTPA's Mire Chapman made two free throws. The Blue Raiders failed to score and Jon Nubine missed a three-pointer for the home team, but the Broncs were able to gather the rebound and reset the offense, and Nubine did not miss the second time, nailing a trifecta from the corner for a 59-56 UTPA advantage. UTPA's Joey Tate then made a steal on the ensuing possession and laid it in, and Chatman finished the 7-0 run with a high-flying dunk after another steal. The Blue Raiders were unable to overcome the deficit, though Tommy Gunn and John Humphrey added three-pointers in the final minute. Gunn ended the night with 17 points, 13 in the second half, including a trio of three-pointers. Senior Lee Nosse led the way in the defeat with a season-high 19 points, 13 in the first half when the Blue Raiders built a 33-31 halftime edge. But the Broncs came out hot in the second half and opened a 10-point lead with 8:34 left in the contest on a Nubine lay-up. But Gunn almost single-handedly erased the deficit, as the Blue Raiders went on a 12-0 run. Gunn nailed back-to-back trifectas, Nosse and Gunn both made two free throws and Nosse gave the Blue Raiders a 56-44 lead with a lay-up. Chatman's two foul shots knotted the game at 56 before the Broncs 7-0 run to take control of the contest. "The big play in the game came when Nubine missed the three and [UTPA] got the rebound and then Nubine hit the three," Middle Tennessee head coach Randy Wiel said. "That play and the steal just after it were big plays that put them in control down the stretch." William Pippen had a season-high eight rebounds but tied a season-low with just seven points in the loss, the 14th straight defeat away from home for the Blue Raiders. Humphrey had nine points, all three-pointers, and five rebounds in just 12 minutes for Middle Tennessee. Chatman scored a game-high 23 points for the Broncs, 14 in the second half, and added seven rebounds. Andrius Sakalys was the only other UTPA player in double figures with 10. The Blue Raiders return to action Friday with the second contest in a five-game road swing with a 6 p.m. game at East Carolina. GAME NOTES **NOSSE SETS SEASON HIGHS** -- Lee Nosse scored a season-high 19

points on 8-of-11 shooting, including 13 in the first half. Nosse tied his season-high with 11 field goal attempts and set a new season-high with the eight makes from the field. Nosse also made a season-high three steals. **PIPPEN UP AND DOWN** -- William Pippen had a season and game-high eight rebounds in the defeat, but also tied a season-low with just seven points. **UNABLE TO BREAK THE STRING** -- The Blue Raiders dropped their 14th straight contest away from home in the two-point loss. **GLASPER MAKES DEBUT** -- Junior Derek Glasper made his Blue Raider debut in the first half and immediately put his name in the scorer's book with a three-pointer. Glasper played eight minutes on the evening, scoring eight points with one rebound. **WILKES MAKES RETURN** -- Senior point guard made a return to action tonight after missing the last two games. Wilkes injured his left wrist in the opening minutes of the December 4 game versus Rice and had not played since. **THIS AND THAT** -- Bryant Mitchell's streak of one blocked shot in 12 straight games ended against the Broncs - Head coach Randy Wiel dropped his first career decision to a school from the state of Texas while at Middle Tennessee - The Blue Raiders dropped to 40-17 when holding an opponent under 70 points, and also dropped to 57-15 under Wiel when leading at the half - Middle Tennessee extended its streak of games with at least one three-pointer to 167.

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