Pair of key home games on tap for Blue Raiders this week

MT welcomes UAB Wednesday at 7 p.m.

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee men's basketball returns home for back-to-back games, beginning with UAB on Wednesday. Tipoff is slated for 7 p.m. at Murphy Center and the game will air on ESPN3 with Chip Walters and Kyle Turnham on the call.

GAME INFORMATION
Opponent: UAB (4-4, 0-0 C-USA)
Date: Wednesday, Dec. 5
Time: 7 p.m. CT
Location: Murfreesboro, Tenn.
Facility: Murphy Center

MEDIA INFORMATION
Live Video: ESPN3.com
Play-by-Play: Chip Walters
Analysis: Kyle Turnham

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

Live Audio - Live Stats

Twitter: @MTAthletics, @MT_MBB

TICKET INFORMATION
Tickets for Middle Tennessee's game at Bridgestone Arena versus Vanderbilt on Dec. 21 at 8 p.m. are now on sale. Tickets are $50 for courtside and $22 for lower bowl. Fans also have the option to purchase a combo for $25 that includes a ticket to both the Vanderbilt game and the game at Belmont on Dec. 13 at 6 p.m.

Students may pick up a voucher for the Vanderbilt game at the Blue Raider Ticket Office until Dec. 20. Students will receive one voucher per ID. Students will be admitted for free, but must show the

voucher at Bridgestone Arena beginning at 6 p.m. Students may also purchase guest tickets for $5 but quantities are limited.

For questions, call 1-888-YES-MTSU or visit GoBlueRaiders.com.

SERIES INFORMATION

- Overall: UAB leads, 5-0
- In Murfreesboro: UAB leads, 2-0
- Under Coach Davis: UAB leads, 3-0
- Current Streak: UAB, 5 games
- Last meeting: UAB 66, MT 56 (12/7/11 in Murfreesboro)
- Last meeting in Murfreesboro: UAB 76, MT 71 (11/17/10)
- Noteworthy: UAB was a member of the Sun Belt from the 1979-80 season through the 1990-91 season before the Blazers joined the Great Midwest. Former head coach Gene Bartow still holds the record for most conference wins in the Sun Belt with 111.

BLUE RAIDER FASTBREAK POINTS

- The Blue Raiders currently rank 28th nationally with an 8.1 rebound margin.
- Shawn Jones posted his third career double-double and second in as many games against Texas Southern on Nov. 24 with a career-high 21 points and 12 rebounds to earn Sun Belt Player of the Week and TSWA Player of the Week honors on Nov. 27.
- After starting last season 4-0 and with the 5-1 start this season, MT got off to its best back-to-back starts since the 1986-87 and 1987-88 seaons. MT started 1986-87 5-0 and 1987-88 6-1.
- Raymond Cintron scored a career-high 22 points at Akron on Dec. 2 and Marcos Knight matched his career-high with 21 points in the contest. Knight also scored 21 at Savannah State on Nov. 13.
- 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.

SCOUTING UAB

- The Blazers are coming off a 102-84 loss at No. 14 North Carolina
- UAB is 1-2 on the road this season, with the 75-55 win coming at fellow Sun Belt member Troy on No. 27
- Five Blazers are averaging double figures, led by Jordan Swing with 15.0 points
- Rod Rucker (13.9 ppg), Terence Jones (10.4 ppg), Fahro Alihodzic (10.3 ppg) and Robert Williams (10.1 ppg) are also averaging double figures
- Rucker also leads UAB in rebounding 8.1 boards per game
- UAB returns seven letterwinners, including three starters, from a team that finished 15-16

overall and 9-7 in Conference USA last season

LAST TIME OUT

Raymond Cintron scored a career-high 22 points, but Middle Tennessee fell short to the Akron Zips, 82-77 in overtime, at Rhodes Arena. Cintron's 6-for-6 performance at the line was crucial, as he sank three consecutive free throws with 14 seconds remaining to tie the game at 70 and send it to overtime. The San Juan, Puerto Rico, native scored 11 of his points in the first half, hitting a trio of 3-pointers in the early stanza.

Marcos Knight matched his career-high of 21 points, scoring 18 of his points in the second half. Knight went on a tear out of the break, reeling off the Blue Raiders' first 12 points of the latter frame. Knight scored 10 unanswered over the first five minutes of the half to give MT its largest lead of the game at 43-36. The two teams battled back and forth throughout the contest, combining for 14 ties and 14 lead changes.

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 271-93 advantage over its opponents.

OUT-REBOUNDING OPPONENTS

The Blue Raiders have out-rebounded their opponent in all five contests this season. MT currently owns a 267-210 rebounding advantage, an average of 38.1 compared to 30.0.

KEEPING UP WITH THE JONES'

Shawn Jones raked in the Sun Belt and Tennessee Sports Writers Association Player of the Week awards on Nov. 27 after posting a pair of double-doubles against UCF and Texas Southern. He tallied 18 points and 13 rebounds, both career-highs, in a 75-61 win over UCF on Tuesday. The Hialeah, Fla., native followed that up by setting a new career-high with 21 points and also grabbed 12 boards in a 79-52 victory over Texas Southern on Saturday. For the week, Jones averaged 19.5 points and 12.5 rebounds while shooting 66.7 percent from the field. He is the only Blue Raider to start every game this season and has scored double figures in three of the last five games.

ROAD WARRIORS

MT has picked up where it left off last season after setting the school record with 11 road wins. The Blue Raiders are off to a 3-2 start on the road this year, including one victory in Sun Belt play. MT has won 47 league road games under the direction of Kermit Davis, the most among any conference school.

DEEP BENCH

All 10 Blue Raiders that saw action at Louisiana on Nov. 29 also scored in the contest. Through seven games, five different Blue Raiders have been the leading scorer and seven Blue Raiders have combined for 19 double-figure scoring performances.

RPI OUTLOOK

MT is currently ranked 50th according to the Pomeroy College Basketball Ratings. The Blue Raiders are the highest ranked Sun Belt team. UAB enters Wednesday contest at No. 136.

SWITCHING IT UP

Through the first five games, head coach Kermit Davis used five different lineups. However, the past

three games the lineup has remained unchanged. The only mainstay each game has been Shawn Jones. James Gallman has made six starts, while Bruce Massey, Marcos Knight and Neiko Hunter each have five starts. Tweety Knight and Kerry Hammonds have started two games apiece and Jacquez Rozier, Raymond Cintron and JT Sulton have each started one game.

HOME SWEET HOME

MT has continued to defend its home court this season after finishing 15-2 in Murphy Center last year. The Blue Raiders are 2-0 at home this year and haven't lost a regular-season game in Murphy Center since Nov. 20, 2011 when MT dropped an 87-84 double overtime decision to Belmont. That's 15 straight regular-season home victories for the Blue Raiders.

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. The San Juan, Puerto Rico, native currently ranks seventh in the Sun Belt with 1.9 treys per game and leads the team with 13 3-pointers this year. Against Akron on Dec. 2, Cintron sank four 3-pointers en route to a career-high 22 points.

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.

BROTHERLY LOVE

The 2012-13 MT squad features two sets of brothers. Marcos Knight is the older brother of Tweety Knight, with both joining the Blue Raiders via Chipola Junior College. Zane Gibson is the older brother of Gavin Gibson, both coming to MT from Baylor School.

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. The Greenville, S.C., native is currently the team's leading scorer and rebounder, averaging 15.9 points and 5.4 boards per game.

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