Blue Raiders' hot shooting leads to victory over UAB

MT shot season-best 50.9 percent from field

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Box Score (PDF)

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - The Middle Tennessee men's basketball team shot a season-high 50.9% from the field Wednesday night, defeating the UAB Blazers 84-64 at Murphy Center.

Raymond Cintron led four Blue Raiders (6-2) in double-figure scoring with 13 points, adding three steals. Shawn Jones had 12 points, five rebounds and made 5-of-6 shots from the field. Marcos Knight and Jason Jones each scored 10 points. MT scored 28 points off 20 UAB turnovers. UAB (4-5) shot just 37.3% from the field in the game but out-rebounded the Blue Raiders, 38-33.

MT used an 11-0 run early in the first half to take a 13-4 lead with 15:14 remaining in the half. UAB got as close as five points before the Blue Raiders got five straight points from Neiko Hunter and S. Jones to take a 26-16 lead with 10:25 to play in the first. Cintron made a three at the end of the half that put MT ahead by 14, 43-29, at halftime.

The win marked the first for the Blue Raiders over UAB.

The Blue Raiders are back in action on Saturday at Murphy Center against Ole Miss. Tipoff is at 4 p.m. and the game will air on ESPN3.

FIRST HALF

• All five starters scored within the first 4:10 - Massey tip-in, Cintron 3-pointer, J. Jones two free throws, M. Knight jumper, S. Jones jumper.
• Blue Raiders go on 11-0 run after timeout to take 13-4 lead with 15:14 to go in the first.
• Kerry Hammonds three-point play puts MT ahead 19-7 with 13:40 remaining in the half.
• MT opened the game 8-for-11 from the field (72.7%) and 4-of-5 at the foul line (80%); finished the half shooting 50% from the field (15-of-30) and 71.4% at the free throw line (10-for-14)
• UAB's Preston Purifoy scored eight points in a Blazers 9-2 run that got UAB within five, 21-16, with 11:51 to play in the first
• S. Jones' two-hand dunk with 10:10 remaining gave the Blue Raiders a 26-16 lead.
• Massey assisted on a Jason Jones' fastbreak layup with 5:57 to play and is fouled. Jones missed

the free throw, but Marcos Knight scored off the offensive rebound to make the score 34-24 with 5:50 to go in the first.
• Raymond Cintron made a three at the end of the half to cap off a 9-2 run that gave MT a 43-29 lead at halftime.

SECOND HALF
• Baskets by Massey and S. Jones put the Blue Raiders ahead by 18, 47-29, with 18:55 to play.
• MT started the second half making four of its first five shots from the field.
• M. Knight made a fadeaway jumper with 13:55 remaining to give MT a 19-point lead, 56-37.
• James Gallman's first 3-pointer of the game put the Blue Raiders ahead by 21, 65-44, with 11:04 to play.
• Jacquez Rozier blocked a fast break layup by Isiah Jones with 6:43 left in the game.
• MT took its largest lead of the game with 4:14 remaining as Hammonds converted a three-point play to put the Blue Raiders ahead by 24, 82-58.
• The Blue Raiders shot 52% from the field in the second half

HEAD COACH KERMIT DAVIS
Opening comments...
"UAB has played an unbelievably tough road schedule, and they have been really, really competitive against that schedule. I think tonight, we just kind of imposed our will on them a little bit. When we guarded them, I thought our 1-3-1 trap bothered (Terence) Jones, who is a terrific point guard. He never really got going. We thought changing defenses would help us with him, and we did a good job on (Rod) Rucker. We fouled him too much, and I know he didn't have a great night at the line. I was just pleased with how we played. We had some spots there in the second half late that we're not real proud of, but it was a really good win over a quality team."

On shutting down UAB's Jordan Swing...
"He got some late. He beat us last year; he was terrific when UAB beat us last year. I thought we made it tough on those guys."

On body language throughout the second half...
"We play so many guys that it really bothers me as a coach when guys get out there and are just "playing." You do all this work all year long and in June and July and you'd give your left arm to play a 10 minute game with officials and 4500 people there, and you don't take advantage of it? I don't care about the time or the score. All these guys need to get better. I was a little perturbed when we got lazy and started fouling."

On offensive production...
"I thought Raymond shot really well. We ran a good offense. We missed about five or six layups in the first half, but I think the depth of our team was good tonight. I thought we got some good bench play. I thought Bruce Massey was the best he's played all year long and he helps our team when he plays like that."

On Raymond Cintron's hot shooting...
"He came off a really big night at Akron. We executed a lot of things for him. When you get him open, you're almost surprised when he doesn't make it."

On next opponent...

"Ole Miss comes in as an undefeated SEC team, just won the SEC-Big East Challenge and beat Rutgers bad. They've got the leading rebounder in the SEC, Murphy Holloway. Buckner can play in the NBA. It's a real rebounding, physical team. We are going to have to have two great days of preparation."

JASON JONES (On 4th time playing UAB): "This is a good team. Conference USA is a good league. UAB is very athletic, aggressive team, so beating UAB is a good win for us. We are going to celebrate and try to get better every day."

(On playing more athletically this year): "It's partly because I am healthier, but I am just being me. I talk to coach a lot and he's told me to put more athletic plays in the game, and I am trying to take advantage of every opportunity that I get."

RAYMOND CINTRON (On shooting better after getting 22 at Akron): "Confidence carries over after a game like that. I've been shooting well lately in practice, so I have a lot of confidence in me, and I know that my teammates do, too, so I just go out and do what I do best."

JONES (On carrying this game effort over to Ole Miss game on Saturday): "Our mind was right coming into this game tonight. We had a couple days of good practice for this game, and when we practice hard like that, it shows up in the game. We have to turn our attention to the Ole Miss game, and we have a good Ole Miss team coming in here on Saturday. So we are going to prepare and work day by day."

CINTRON (On taking a lot of early shots): "I just like to feel comfortable on my shots, and I didn't think they were close on a lot of my shots. I just feel comfortable and I just shoot it really. If they are going to leave me alone, then I like to make them pay."

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