Blue Raiders welcome Ole Miss for Saturday showdown

MT looks to remain undefeated at home

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee men's basketball looks to remain undefeated at home this season as the Blue Raiders welcome the Ole Miss Rebels to Murphy Center on Saturday. Tipoff is slated for 4 p.m. CT and the game will air on ESPN3 with Keith Morehouse and Nate Ross on the call.

GAME INFORMATION
Matchup: Ole Miss (6-0, 0-0 SEC) at Middle Tennessee (6-2, 1-0 SBC)
Date: Saturday, Dec. 8
Time: 4 p.m. CT
Location: Murfreesboro, Tenn.
Facility: Murphy Center

MEDIA INFORMATION
Live Video: ESPN3.com
Play-by-Play: Keith Morehouse
Analysis: Nate Ross

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

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: Series tied, 3-3
- In Murfreesboro: First meeting
- Under coach Davis: MT leads, 1-0
- First meeting: UM 65, MT 36 (1947-48 season)
- Last meeting: MT 68, UM 56 (12/21/11 in Southaven, Miss.)
- Current Streak: MT, 3 games
- Longest MT streak: 3 games (current)// Longest UM streak: 3 games (1947-1963)
- Noteworthy: Former MT assistant coach Al Pinkins is currently an assistant on the Ole Miss staff.

BLUE RAIDER FASTBREAK POINTS

- The Blue Raiders currently rank 28th nationally with an 8.1 rebound margin as of Dec. 2.
- 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 OLE MISS

- The Rebels bring an undefeated record into Saturday's contest, earning an 80-67 win over Rutgers in their most recent out on Dec. 1
- Saturday's contest will mark the first road game of the season for Ole Miss and the first visit to Middle Tennessee in program history
- Marshall Henderson leads a trio of Rebels scoring double figures with 17.2 points per game

- Murphy Holloway is averaging 16.0 ppg and a team-leading 10.3 rebounds per game, while Reginald Buckner is also averaging double-figure scoring with 10.5 ppg
- Ole Miss returns eight letterwinners, including four starters, from a team that finished 20-14 overall and 8-8 in the SEC last year
- As of Dec. 2, the Rebels led the country in turnover margin at +9.0

LAST TIME OUT

Middle Tennessee shot a season-high 50.9% from the field Wednesday, defeating the UAB Blazers 84-64 at Murphy Center. Raymond Cintron led four Blue Raiders 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 shot just 37.3% from the field in the game but out-rebounded the Blue Raiders, 38-33.

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 3-0 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 16 straight regular-season home victories for the Blue Raiders.

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 278-124 advantage over its opponents.

OUT-REBOUNDING OPPONENTS

The Blue Raiders have out-rebounded their opponent in five of six contests this season. MT currently owns a 300-248 rebounding advantage, an average of 37.5 compared to 31.0.

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. 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. 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 four of the last six 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.

SWITCHING IT UP

Head coach Kermit Davis has used six different starting lineups in eight games. Through the first five games, Davis used five different lineups. Games 5-7 remained unchanged. In all, 11 different Blue Raiders have started at least one game this year. The only mainstay each game has been Shawn Jones. James Gallman, Bruce Massey and Marcos Knight have each started six and Neiko Hunter

has five. Tweety Knight, Raymond Cintron and Kerry Hammonds have started two games apiece and Jacquez Rozier, Jason Jones and JT Sulton have each started one game.

DEEP BENCH

All 10 Blue Raiders that saw action at Louisiana on Nov. 29 also scored in the contest. Through eight games, five different Blue Raiders have been the leading scorer and seven Blue Raiders have combined for 23 double-figure scoring performances.

RPI OUTLOOK

MT is currently ranked 41st according to the Pomeroy College Basketball Ratings. The Blue Raiders are the highest ranked Sun Belt team. Ole Miss enters Saturday's contest ranked 23rd.

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 2.0 treys per game and leads the team with 16 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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