Blue Raiders host North Texas in New Year's Eve showdown on ESPNU

Tipoff slated for 7:02 p.m. from Murphy Center

December 30, 2012 · @MTAthletics

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - The Blue Raider men's basketball team looks to remain undefeated at home when the North Texas Mean Green visits Murphy Center for a New Year's Eve showdown Monday. Tipoff is slated for 7:02 p.m. CT and the contest will air on ESPNU with Rich Hollenberg and Barry Booker on the call.

GAME INFORMATION
Matchup: North Texas Mean Green (5-8, 0-2 SBC) vs. Middle Tennessee Blue Raiders (10-3, 2-0 SBC)
Date: Monday, Dec. 31
Time: 7:02 p.m. CT
Location: Murfreesboro, Tenn.
Facility: Murphy Center

MEDIA INFORMATION
TV: ESPNU
Play-by-Play: Rich Hollenberg
Analysis: Barry Booker

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 Video - Live Audio - Live Stats

Twitter: @MTAthletics, @MT_MBB

SERIES INFORMATION

- Overall: MT leads, 9-6 // As Sun Belt foes: Same
- In Murfreesboro: MT leads, 6-1

- Under Davis: MT leads, 9-6
- First meeting: MT 105, NT 71 (1/6/01 in Murfreesboro)
- Last meeting: MT 68, NT 66 (2/2/12 in Denton)
- Last meeting in Murfreesboro: MT 78, NT 71 (1/5/11)
- Last North Texas win: NT 88, MT 79 (3/8/09 in Hot Springs, Ark.)
- Current Streak: MT, 3 games
- Longest MT streak: 3 games (1/30/10 - current) // Longest NT streak: 2 games (2x, last - 2/14-3/8/09)
- Noteworthy: MT has won three in a row over North Texas and has not lost to the Mean Green at home since Feb. 14, 2009, which is the only time North Texas has won in Murfreesboro.

BLUE RAIDER FASTBREAK POINTS

- MT is undefeated at 7-0 in home games this season, including one at Bridgestone Arena, and holds a 21-2 record at Murphy Center over the past two seasons. The Blue Raiders have won 19 straight regular-season games at Murphy Center.
- MT has now reached the 10-win mark before the new year for two straight seasons.
- MT has won six of the last seven Sun Belt regular-season games, daiting back to Feb. 9, 2012.
- MT has won four of the last six meetings against SEC opponents.
- MT has beaten two SEC opponent in back-to-back seasons for the first time in program history.
- MT currently ranks 17th nationally in 3-point field goal percentage defense (.277).
- Marcos Knight has scored double figures in 10 of the last 12 games and all but three games this season.
- 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.

SCOUTING NORTH TEXAS

- North Texas is coming off a 70-64 loss to WKU on Saturday
- The Mean Green has lost its last two games and is 0-4 on the road this year
- Tony Mitchell leads four Mean Green in double-figure scoring with 13.8 ppg
- Jordan Williams (11.1 ppg), Alzee Williams (10.8 ppg) and Chris Jones (10.2 ppg) are also averaging double figures
- Mitchell also leads NT in rebounding with 8.8 boards per game
- NT is under the direction of first-year head coach Tony Benford

LAST TIME OUT

Led by 15 points apiece from Shawn Jones and Marcos Knight, Middle Tennessee defeated the FIU Panthers 69-52 at Murphy Center Saturday night. The victory was head coach Kermit Davis' 100th career Sun Belt win. Jones added 13 rebounds, tying a career-high, for his third double-double of the season. Knight also had a season-high in rebounds with nine. Raymond Cintron tallied 12 points off the bench on four three-pointers. The Blue Raiders shot 43.4% from the field on Saturday, holding FIU to 38.8%. MT dominated the glass, out-rebounding the Panthers, 43-27, and scoring 10 points off 15 offensive rebounds.

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 7-0 in home games, including a win at Bridgestone Arena, 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 19 straight regular-season victories in Murphy Center for the Blue Raiders. MT is now 21-2 over the last two seasons in Murphy Center.

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 has outscored its opponent in every game this season, currently owning a 405-164 advantage.

TAKING ON THE SEC

With the win over Vanderbilt on Dec. 21, MT has now beaten two SEC opponents in back-to-back seasons for the first time in program history. MT also beat Ole Miss on Dec. 8. The Blue Raiders defeated both Tennessee and Ole Miss last season.

The win over Ole Miss this year also marked the first win over an SEC opponent in Murphy Center since a 93-90 overtime victory against Vanderbilt on Feb. 1, 1995. MT is now 2-1 against the SEC this year (Lost to No. 10 Florida on Nov. 18) and has won four of the last six meetings against SEC opponents.

SUN BELT'S WINNINGEST COACH

With South Alabama's Ronnie Arrow retiring earlier this season, Kermit Davis is now the Sun Belt's winningest active coach. He is one of only four league coaches to crack the century mark and currently ranks fourth all-time with 100 league wins, behind Arrow (112), Gene Bartow (111), and Dickey Nutt (103).

OUT-REBOUNDING OPPONENTS

The Blue Raiders have out-rebounded their opponent in 10 contests this season. MT currently owns a 480-409 rebounding advantage, an average of 36.9 compared to 31.5.

DEEP BENCH

All 10 Blue Raiders that saw action at Louisiana on Nov. 29 also scored in the contest. Through 13 games, seven different Blue Raiders have been the leading scorer and nine Blue Raiders have combined for 34 double-figure scoring performances.

MORE ON THE DEPTH

MT currently has 10 players averaging more than 11 minutes per game. Half of those are averaging more than 18 minutes.

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.

SWITCHING IT UP Head coach Kermit Davis has used eight different starting lineups this year. Through the first five games, Davis used five different lineups. In all, 11 different Blue Raiders have started at least one game this year.

RPI OUTLOOK
MT is currently ranked 32nd in the Sagarin Ratings and 40th according to the Pomeroy College Basketball Ratings. The Blue Raiders are the highest ranked Sun Belt team in both ratings.

TEAM OF THE WEEK
Middle Tennessee was named the Mid-Major Team of the Week by ESPN.com's Myron Medcalf on Dec. 13. The Blue Raiders earned the nod after knocking off Ole Miss, 65-62.

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 2.2 treys per game and leads the team with 29 3-pointers this year. Against Akron on Dec. 2, Cintron sank four 3-pointers en route to a career-high 22 points. He tied his career-high of five 3-pointers against Tennessee State on Dec. 18.

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 15.6 points and 6.1 boards per game.

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