

Blue Raiders take down North Texas for sixth-straight win

MT has won 10 of last 11

January 24, 2013 · @MTAthletics

[Box Score \(PDF\)](#)

DENTON, Texas - Four Blue Raiders scored double figures as Middle Tennessee claimed its sixth-straight victory with a 72-64 win over North Texas on Thursday night at The Super Pit. MT has won 10 of its last 11 and sits atop the Sun Belt with a 9-1 record and is 17-4 overall.

Marcos Knight led the Blue Raiders with 15 points and James Gallman added 13, 11 of which came in the second half. JT Sulton scored 11 points and Neiko Hunter tallied 10, as the two combined for a 10-of-13 performance from the field.



The Blue Raiders finished the contest shooting 53.7 percent, including a 61.5 percent clip in the second stanza. MT's bench also owned the Mean Green (8-13, 3-7 SBC) with a 25-1 advantage.

After Jordan Williams knocked down a pair of free throws to open the contest for North Texas, Hunter knocked down a jumper and the Blue Raiders never trailed again. Williams led the Mean Green with 20 points.

With the game tied at 11 midway through the early frame, Gallman hit his first basket of the game and MT reeled off six straight points to take the lead for good. The Blue Raiders took a 28-23 lead into halftime.

After Williams knocked down a triple coming out of the break for North Texas, MT went on a 9-1 run for the double-digit lead, capped by a Raymond Cintron trey that made it 37-27. Gallman followed with the next three baskets for MT, knocking down a trio of 3-pointers over a 1:04 span that gave the Blue Raiders a 15-point lead, their largest of the game.

The Mean Green worked the deficit back to single digits with just under nine minutes to play and trimmed it to five with 1:23 remaining when Niko Stojiljkovic hit a 3-pointer to make it a 66-61 contest. Stojiljkovic finished the game with 12 points.

Free throws proved crucial in the final minute, as Knight knocked down five straight to give MT a seven-point cushion with 32 seconds to play. Sulton also hit one with six seconds to go to account for the final score.

In addition to Williams and Stojiljkovic scoring double figures for North Texas, Roger Franklin added 14 points and Tony Mitchell had 10. The Mean Green shot 44.9 percent and held a 32-29 rebounding advantage.

MT returns home on Saturday to host WKU. Tipoff is slated for 3 p.m. and the game will air on ESPN2. Fans are encouraged to wear blue as part of the "Blueout" and it will also be the Suits and Sneakers game as the Blue Raiders support Coaches vs. Cancer.

HEAD COACH KERMIT DAVIS

Opening statement...

"North Texas has been competing really hard. I was really impressed with the job that Tony (Benford) has done. Those guys came out on edge tonight and played really hard. Jordan Williams is a terrific player. We never could get a grasp on the game."

On Marcos Knight and bench play...

"He came in the game and didn't guard as well as we'd like him to. But I thought we put the ball in his hands and he stepped up and had to make free throws. Down the stretch that was big.

"I thought we got good bench play. Jason Jones played well. James Gallman obviously gave us a nice lift. It's kind of been the MO of our team that we have different guys like JJ and James that were huge factors tonight."

SENIOR GUARD MARCOS KNIGHT

On this being a trap game...

"We take it one game at a time. We didn't look forward to Saturday. North Texas is a great team so we had to put a lot of focus into what they do."

On Jordan Williams and Tony Mitchell...

"Both of those guys are great scorers and great players. Tony Mitchell makes their team go, so we focused a lot on how we were going to guard him. We put our scout right into the game tonight."

On the double-team...

"We take pride in playing defense. That's what makes our offense go. If you don't play good defense, you won't score the basketball. Coach Davis and the staff had a great scout tonight, but we still have a lot of things to clean up."