Blue Raiders Blueout the Hilltoppers Saturday on ESPN2

Tipoff slated for 3:05 p.m. at Murphy Center

January 26, 2013 · @MTAthletics

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee looks to extend its six-game winning streak and remain atop the Sun Belt when the Blue Raiders welcome the WKU Hilltoppers to Murphy Center Saturday. Tipoff is slated for 3:05 p.m. CT and the game will air nationally on ESPN2 with Rich Hollenberg and Mark Adams on the call.

Tickets are now available for the Sun Belt Championship in Hot Springs, Ark. All-session booklets are $83 and fans can purchase by calling 1-888-YES-MTSU or clicking here

GAME INFORMATION
Matchup: WKU Hilltoppers (11-10, 5-5 SBC) at Middle Tennessee Blue Raiders (15-4, 7-1 SBC)
Date: Saturday, Jan. 26
Time: 3:05 p.m. CT
Location: Murfreesboro, Tenn.
Facility: Murphy Center
Tickets: Available here or by calling 1-888-YES-MTSU

MEDIA INFORMATION
TV: ESPN2
Play-by-Play: Rich Hollenberg
Analysis: Mark Adams

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

WatchESPN - Live Audio - Live Stats

Twitter: @MTAthletics, @MT_MBB

SERIES INFORMATION

- Overall: WKU leads, 92-35 // As Sun Belt foes: WKU leads, 18-9
- At MT: WKU leads, 21-19 (dating back to 1957)
- Under Davis: WKU leads, 14-9
- First meeting: WKU 32, MT 21 (1914-15, location unavailable)
- Last meeting in Murfreesboro: MT 72, WKU 64 (2/9/12)
- Last meeting: WKU 73, MT 67 (2/25/12 in Bowling Green)
- Current Streak: WKU, 1 game
- Longest MT streak: 6 games (1924-1930) // Longest WKU streak: 23 games (1931-1955)
- Noteworthy: MT has won the last three meetings in Murfreesboro. WKU's last win in Murfreesboro was a 68-49 decision on Feb. 28, 2009.

BLUE RAIDER FASTBREAK POINTS

- Kermit Davis ranks third on the list of the Sun Belt's all-time winningest coaches with 107 wins. As the winningest active coach, Davis needs just six wins to become the conference's all-time winningest coach, surpassing Ronnie Arrow's 112.
- MT is undefeated at 11-0 in home games this season, including one at Bridgestone Arena, and holds a 25-2 record at Murphy Center over the past two seasons. The Blue Raiders have won 23 straight regular-season games at Murphy Center.
- MT has won six in a row and 10 of the last 11 games.
- MT is one of 11 teams in the country 11-0 or better at home this year.
- MT currently ranks 13th nationally in 3-point field goal percentage defense (.282).
- MT is one of 12 teams in the country with 17 or more wins, only behind Gonzaga, Michigan, Syracuse and Wichita State with 18 each.
- MT ranks 33rd nationally in defensive efficiency with a rating of 89.1 according to Pomeroy. The Blue Raiders have held five of their last six opponents to 60 points or less and nine of their last 11.
- MT has now reached the 10-win mark before the new year for two straight seasons.
- A win Saturday would give MT its best back-to-back starts in program history, including the 20-2 start last year. Prior to the past two seasons, MT's best starts included an 18-5 in 1985-86 record and 19-3 in 1986-87.
- 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 WKU

- WKU is coming off a 65-57 loss at South Alabama on Thursday and the Hilltoppers have dropped five of their last six
- WKU is 2-6 on the road this year
- Jamal Crook leads a trio of Toppers averaging double figures with 14.5 ppg, but has missed the last 10 games

- T.J. Price (14.1 ppg) and George Fant (11.9 ppg) are also averaging double figures
- WKU returns nine letterwinners, including four starters, from a team that finished 16-19 last year

LAST TIME OUT
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. 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.

ALL THEY DO IS WIN
With 17 wins, the Blue Raiders have already clinched a winning season. MT plays 31 regular season games this year and has the potential of further games in the conference tournament and a postseason berth. This is the ninth winning season under Davis and fifth in the last six years for MT.

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 sits third with 107 league wins, behind Arrow (112) and Gene Bartow (111).

HEADED TO C-USA
MT will join Conference USA for the 2013-14 season. Next year will feature a 16-game schedule for with each school playing every team in the league once and a geographic opponent twice (no divisions). Middle Tennessee's home and away opponent will be UAB. The 2014 C-USA men's and women's basketball tournaments will take place at UTEP.

ESPN2 RETURNS
The Blue Raiders Jan. 26 home game against WKU has been selected by ESPN2 as the Sun Belt's Wildcard Game. Last year, the Blue Raiders played twice on ESPN2 in Murphy Center, earning a 68-60 win over UALR on Feb. 11 before falling to Minnesota, 78-72, in the quarterfinals of the National Invitation Tournament (NIT). The last time MT and WKU met on ESPN2 was Jan. 23, 2010, when former forward and current student assistant coach Desmond "Boogie" Yates scored 28 points and became the school's all-time leading scorer in an 84-74 MT victory in Bowling Green, Ky.

SUSTAINED LEADERSHIP
On Jan. 5, MT women's basketball head coach Rick Insell earned his 183rd win to become the program's all-time winningest coach. Insell joined MT men's basketball head coach Kermit Davis, who set the school record on Dec. 29, 2011, as an all-time wins leader. MT is just one of four schools (Gonzaga, Sacred Heart and UALR) to have both their current men's and women's basketball coaches as all-time wins leaders.

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 11-0 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 23 straight regular-season victories in Murphy Center for the Blue Raiders. MT is now 25-2 over the last two seasons in Murphy Center.

RANKINGS
MT ranks the highest in the Sun Belt in all of the following:
NCAA RPI: 36
ESPN Daily RPI: 37
ESPN BPI: 48
Pomeroy: 47
Sagarin: 42
ESPN Mid-Major Poll: 8
Bleacher Report Mid-Major: 6

EXPERIENCED SQUAD
According to Ken Pomeroy, MT is tied as the second-most experienced team in the country with an average of 2.53 years, behind only Valparaiso (2.69) and matching Savannah State. The roster features a combined 13 juniors and seniors compared to four freshmen and sophomores.

DEEP BENCH
The Blue Raider bench accounts for 43.3 percent of the minutes, which ranks 10th nationally according Pomeroy. MT currently has nine players averaging more than 12 minutes per game. Seven of those are averaging more than 18 minutes. Nine different Blue Raiders have been the leading scorer and ten Blue Raiders have combined for 56 double-figure scoring performances.

BENCH PRODUCTION
The Blue Raider bench has outscored its opponent in all but one game this season, currently owning a 614-270 advantage, or an average of 29.2 to 12.9 points per game.

MAINTAINING THE LEAD
MT has not trailed after halftime in its last six games. The Blue Raiders are 14-0 this season when leading at halftime.

SWITCHING IT UP
Head coach Kermit Davis has used 11 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.

DOMINATING DEFENSE
Pomeroy ranks the Blue Raiders 33rd nationally in defensive efficiency with a rating of 89.1. MT held North Texas to 18.5 percent shooting in the first half of the Dec. 31 contest. That is the best field goal percentage defense for the Blue Raiders since Feb. 1, 2007 when MT held Denver to 18.2 percent (4-for-22) in the second half. MT also held North Texas to five field goals in the first half, a season-low for an opponent. It was the fewest field goals for an opponent in a half since Arkansas State had five on Jan. 19, 2012 in the second half.

INTIMIDATION FACTOR
Opponents haven't had much luck at the line against MT. The opposition is shooting 62.6 percent from the stripe, fifth-lowest in the country.

OUT-REBOUNDING OPPONENTS
The Blue Raiders have out-rebounded their opponent in 15 contests this season. MT currently owns

a 782-661 rebounding advantage, an average of 37.2 compared to 31.5.

WINNING BIG

MT's 82-50 win over UALR and 82-60 win over Louisiana marked the first time in 15 years the Blue Raiders beat consecutive conference opponents by at least 20 points. On Jan. 13, 1998, MT beat OVC foe Tennessee Tech, 80-60, then on Jan. 15 beat Austin Peay, 63-38.

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.

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. The San Juan, Puerto Rico, native currently ranks fifth in the Sun Belt with a 41.0 3-point field goal percentage and leads the team with 41 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.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

Kermit Davis, a former assistant coach at Idaho, is one of four current head coaches that comprised the 1986-87 Idaho staff.
Tim Floyd - Head Coach (now HC at UTEP)

Larry Eustachy - Assistant Coach (now HC at Colorado State)

Kermit Davis - Assistant Coach (now HC at Middle Tennessee State)

Randy Bennett - Graduate Assistant (now HC at Saint Mary's)

Saturday's game is sponsored by Wilson Bank & Trust, while Sunday's game is sponsored by Tennessee Pork Producers. Other sponsors on hand with giveaways this weekend include: Tennessee National Guard, Academy Sports & Outdoors, Cellular Concepts, Northwestern Mutual, The Grove Apartments, Entersource, Tennessee Starts 529, Purity Dairy, Tigermarket, Marco's Pizza, Sonic, Toot's and Jack in the Box.

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