Win over ULM sends seniors out with perfect 16-0 home record

Blue Raiders win 14th straight, tie school record

February 23, 2013 · @MTAthletics

Box Score (PDF)

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee capped a perfect 16-0 regular season home slate with an 87-46 dismantling of ULM on Saturday night at the Murphy Center.

MT (25-4, 17-1 SBC) dominated ULM (4-20, 3-15 SBC) in every statistical category and won its 14th-straight game to tie the longest winning streak in school history.

Tweety Knight led all scorers with 15, while Marcos Knight and Raymond Cintron each had 11 in strong Senior Day performances. Torin Walker broke his career-record in scoring with 10 points.

As a team whose depth has been touted throughout the season, the Blue Raiders outscored ULM 45-19 in bench points. Additionally, MT forced 19 Warhawk turnovers and scored 26 points off turnovers. ULM scored just four points off of nine MT turnovers.

As a team, MT hit a season-best 12 3-pointers and shot 52.6 percent from the field.

The Blue Raiders stormed out of the gates, starting the game with 10 unanswered points and never trailed in the game.

Up 18-10, MT went on its biggest run of the game, breaking off on 15-0 tear and pushing its lead to 20.

Walker capped a later scoring streak of seven unanswered points to close the half with a buzzer-beating dunk, sending the teams to halftime at 46-15. That streak was part of a bigger 28-5 run over the final 11:37.

T. Knight, who had just two first half points, exploded with about 11 minutes remaining, scoring 10 straight points for the Blue Raiders.

MT slowly increased its lead throughout the final frame, rattling off nine unanswered with just under 10 to go.

With just over five minutes remaining, Jason Jones hit a 3-pointer to put MT up by 51, its largest lead of the night.

The Blue Raiders close out their final Sun Belt regular season with road games at Troy on Feb. 28 and WKU on March 2.

First half

- Kermit Davis started five of six seniors: James Gallman, Bruce Massey, Marcos Knight, Raymond Cintron and JT Sulton
- MT started the game on a 10-0 run, including 3-pointers by Massey and Cintron.
- ULM's Amos Olatayo drew a technical foul with 10:42 to go, and Marcos Knight hit both free throws, putting MT up 22-10.
- Up 18-10 with 11:37 remaining, MT went on a 15-0 tear to increase its lead to 23. Marcos Knight reached double-figure scoring for the 24th time this season after sinking the final 3-pointer of the run.
- MT hit six 3-pointers in the first half, tying a season-best mark set against UALR.
- Torin Walker scored his only two points of the half on a tip-in as time expired
- Blue Raiders' defense held ULM to only 15 first-half points, a season low for an MT opponent. They also held ULM to 19 first half points in an earlier meeting this season.
- MT closed the half with seven unanswered points, part of a 28-5 overall run.

Second half

- Torin Walker broke his previous career-best mark of 8 points when he hit a layup at the 12-minute mark. Walker finished with 10 for the game.
- Tweety Knight went on a scoring spree halfway through the final period, scoring 10 straight and all but five of his total points in under two minutes.
- At 6:37, Jason Jones threw down a dunk to put MT in the lead by 50 points, the second time MT has led by the half century mark this season.
- All six seniors saw at least 22 minutes.

QUOTES

Head Coach Kermit Davis

Opening Statement

It was a great way for our seniors to go out; to go undefeated at home, which is only the second time in school history that has ever happened. I think that's the most home victories in a season. Our guys have done a lot of firsts here. I'm proud of them for that. It was good that they all got to play. They all contributed. It was fun and it was a good day for the Raiders.

On keeping players motivated

About three games ago, we tried to make it a five game season. Now we're 3-0 in this five game season. I thought maybe we may clinch with two or three games to go and we did. Then it kind of gets to be a RPI thing now for our team because the seeding (for the conference tournament) is over. So for the first time we have really talked about our RPI, and right now it's in the low twenties. It

was at twenty-two today so we understand how important these next two games are in finishing out the regular season.

On the legacy of the senior class

I think they will be defined in the next three to four weeks. Now, you can define them with fifty-two wins and the upsets they've had with BCS schools and two straight conference championships. The biggest thing I can define them with right now is just, people see glimpses of it. But I see it every day, the character and the work ethic and their love for one another is unbelievable. I've been doing this stuff for a long time and this is a special group of guys. So we're still trying to define it and trying to re-create out identity every day and get better.

On the play of Torin Walker

It was good to just get him some confidence. I didn't think Torin, and Torin would agree, he didn't play very well on Thursday night. So it was good that he got some balls, he finished some balls and we understand that he can sure be a big part of what we're doing.

Junior Center Torin Walker

On if it was an extra incentive to do well on Senior and Legends Night

It was very exciting to see all the legends and all the fans out there supporting us throughout the entire season. We got very excited to see all the support this late in the season. It helped us get the win.

On if it's difficult to concentrate during blowout victories

In the big margin wins we've had, we are just focus on getting better as a team. We don't look at the score at all. The score is 0-0 and we just try and get better every possession.

Senior Guard James Gallman, Jr.

On whether they look at RPI:

We really don't. We are just trying to get to the NCAA Tournament. We don't pay attention to anything else right now.

On why this team is so good playing in Murphy Center:

It's our fans. Our fans get us hype. They give us energy so we have to play good for them.

On how the team gets motivated when each game is a blowout:

We are just focused on getting to the NCAA Tournament. We just play hard, play defense and compete. We try to be the toughest team in the building. We play hard and compete.

On not looking at the RPI because of last year's disappointment:

We learn from our mistakes last year. We took our foot off the gas pedal at the end losing two in a

row. This year we have two more games that are away so we need to focus on these two games and getting into the tournament. If we take care of business we will be fine.

Printed on April 23, 2014
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/66065