Blue Raiders take 14-game winning streak to Troy Thursday

MT seeking seventh-straight road win

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - The Middle Tennessee men's basketball team looks to make it 15 straight wins when the Blue Raiders visit Troy Thursday. Tipoff is slated for 7:30 p.m. CT from Trojan Arena.

GAME INFORMATION
Matchup: Middle Tennessee Blue Raiders (25-4, 17-1 SBC) at Troy Trojans (11-18, 6-12 SBC)
Date: Thursday, Feb. 28
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Location: Troy, Ala.
Facility: Trojan Arena

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

Live Video - Live Audio - Live Stats

Twitter: @MTAthletics, @MT_MBB

SERIES INFORMATION

- Overall: MT leads, 11-7 // As Sun Belt foes: MT leads, 9-7
- In Troy: Troy leads, 5-3
- Under coach Davis: MT leads, 9-7
- First meeting: MT 77, Troy 58 (12/5/70 in Murfreesboro)
- First Sun Belt meeting: Troy 70, MT 57 (1/21/06 in Troy)
- Last meeting: MT 93, Troy 41 (2/9/13 in Murfreesboro)
- Last meeting in Troy: MT 65, Troy 53 (1/5/12)
- Current Streak: MT 3 games
- Longest MT streak: 5 games (2/28/07 - 12/11/08)// Longest Troy streak: 3 games (2x, last

2/12/09 - 2/18/10)

- Noteworthy: MT has won four of the last five meetings, but Troy has won three of the last four at home.

BLUE RAIDER FASTBREAK POINTS

- Kermit Davis is the Sun Belt's all-time winningest coach with 115 league wins. He broke the record at UALR in MT's 66-61 win on Feb. 16.
- MT clinched its second-straight Sun Belt regular-season title and third in the last four years, in addition to the No. 1 seed at the league tournament with the win over South Alabama on Feb. 23.
- MT finished a perfect 16-0 at home this season, including one at Bridgestone Arena. MT holds a 30-2 record at Murphy Center over the past two seasons. The Blue Raiders have won 28 straight regular-season home games, which is second-longest in the country.
- MT has won 14 in a row, the third-longest streak nationally and matching the longest in MT history, and 18 of the last 19 games.
- MT's 17 league wins are a school record, surpassing the mark of 14 set last season.
- MT is one of two teams in the country 16-0 or better at home this year. Michigan is the only other team 16-0 at home. It is the best home record in school history. MT is one of two teams with at least 25 wins and nine road wins.
- MT is seventh nationally with an .825 winning percentage over the past two seasons and tied for fifth with 52 combined wins in the last two years.
- MT currently ranks 20th nationally in scoring defense (58.0) and ninth in 3-point field goal percentage defense (.289).
- MT has the second-most wins in the country, behind Gonzaga with 27.
- MT ranks 11th nationally in defensive efficiency with a rating of 87.0 according to Pomeroy. The Blue Raiders have held eight of their last 10 opponents to 60 points or less and 15 of their last 18.
- MT has back-to-back 20-win seasons for the first time since the 1987-88 and 1988-89 seasons.
- With the 18-4 start this year and the 20-2 start last year, MT is off to its best back-to-back starts in 26 years. Prior to the past two seasons, MT's best starts included an 18-5 in 1985-86 record and 19-3 in 1986-87.
- 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 TROY

- The Trojans have dropped five of their last six, including a 58-50 loss at Arkansas State last Saturday
- Troy is 8-5 at home this season, including a 5-3 mark in league play
- Emil Jones leads Troy with 11.2 points per game and is second in rebounding with 5.5 boards per game
- Hunter Williams is also averaging double figures with 10.6 rebounds per game
- Ray Chambers leads Troy in rebounding with 5.7 rebounds per game

PREVIOUS MEETING

Middle Tennessee's Raymond Cintron knocked down a career-high six 3-pointers and five Blue Raiders hit double-figures to knock off Troy, 93-41, on Feb. 9 at Murphy Center. The 52-point win was the largest margin of victory in Sun Belt history for the Blue Raiders. Cintron led the Blue Raiders with 20 points off the bench, two shy of his career-high, including a 6-for-8 shooting performance from beyond the arc. It marked a season-high 55 bench points.

LAST TIME OUT

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 dominated ULM 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. 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.

CHAMPS AGAIN

With the 85-50 win over South Alabama on Feb. 21, MT clinched its second-straight Sun Belt regular-season title and third in the last four years. MT was the first team in the country to clinch its conference title. The Blue Raiders earned the No. 1 seed for the upcoming conference tournament and a first-round bye.

RECEIVING VOTES

MT is receiving votes in both the AP and USA Today Coaches Polls. MT received votes in the coaches poll for the sixth straight week with 29 and AP Poll for the second straight week with two.

ALL THEY DO IS WIN

With 25 wins, the Blue Raiders have clinched a winning season. This is the ninth winning season under Davis and fifth in the last six years for MT. MT has also cracked double-figure wins for six straight seasons. The Blue Raiders have won double-digit games at home in each of the past six years and nine of 11 seasons under Davis. MT now has back-to-back 20-win seasons for the first time since the 1987-88 and 1988-89 seasons. Ironically, in 1987-88, MT finished 23-11, went to the NIT and won two games, including one over Tennessee. The Blue Raiders followed that up with a 23-8 record and NCAA tournament berth where they beat Florida State before falling to Virginia.

SUN BELT'S WINNINGEST COACH

Kermit Davis became the Sun Belt's all-time winningest coach with MT's 66-61 victory at UALR on Feb. 16, 2013 with his 113th league win. Davis surpassed South Alabama's Ronnie Arrow who had 112 league wins. Davis currently has 115 league wins.

HOME DOMINANCE

MT has made a habit of winning big at home in Sun Belt action. The Blue Raiders have won 11 straight conference home games by double figures, dating back to an eight-point victory over UALR on Feb. 11, 2012.

STIFF COMPETITION

MT's four losses this season have come against some tough competition. The four teams that have

beaten the Blue Raiders have a .785 (84-23) combined winning percentage. Florida currently ranks No. 6 in the coaches poll and No. 8 in the AP poll, while Akron is receiving votes in the AP Poll and ranked 24th in the coaches' poll.

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). MT's home and away opponent will be UAB. The 2014 C-USA men's and women's basketball tournaments will take place at UTEP.

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.

RANKINGS

MT ranks the highest in the Sun Belt in all of the following:
NCAA RPI: 27
ESPN Daily RPI: 27
ESPN BPI: 43
Pomeroy: 21
Sagarin: 52
ESPN Mid-Major Poll: 2
Bleacher Report Mid-Major: 3
AP Poll: RV (2)
USA Today Coaches Poll: RV (29)

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 15-0 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 27 straight regular-season home victories for the Blue Raiders. MT is 29-2 over the last two seasons in Murphy Center.

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 42.0 percent of the minutes, which ranks 12th nationally according Pomeroy. MT currently has nine players averaging more than 12 minutes per game. Seven of those are averaging more than 18 minutes. Ten different Blue Raiders have been the leading scorer and 11 Blue Raiders have combined for 85 double-figure scoring performances.

BENCH PRODUCTION

The Blue Raider bench has outscored its opponent in all but one game this season, currently owning a 885-414 advantage, or an average of 30.5 to 14.3 points per game. MT's bench scored a season-high 55 points against Troy on Feb. 9.

MAINTAINING THE LEAD

MT did not trail for three straight games from Feb. 2-9 or five of the last six. MT has not trailed after halftime in 13 of the last 14 games. The Blue Raiders are 21-0 this season when leading at halftime.

SWITCHING IT UP

Head coach Kermit Davis has used 12 different starting lineups this year. In all, 11 different Blue Raiders have started at least one game this year.

DOMINATING DEFENSE

Pomeroy ranks the Blue Raiders 10th in 3-point defense at 28.9 percent and 11th nationally in defensive efficiency with a rating of 87.0. 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 63.2 percent from the stripe, second-lowest in the country.

OUT-REBOUNDING OPPONENTS

The Blue Raiders have out-rebounded their opponent in 22 contests this season. MT currently owns a 1070-889 rebounding advantage, or 36.9 compared to 30.7 rpg.

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.

WINNING BIG

MT's 52-point victory over Troy on Feb. 9 was the largest margin of victory in a Sun Belt game in program history. 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.

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.

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 second in the Sun Belt with a 43.2 3-point field goal percentage and leads the team with 61 3-pointers this year. Against Akron on Dec. 2, Cintron sank four 3-pointers en route to a career-high 22 points. He hit a career-high six treys against Troy on Feb. 9.

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.

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