Massey named SBC Defensive Player of the Year, Davis Coach of the Year

Three Blue Raiders earn all-conference honors

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NEW ORLEANS - Senior guard Bruce Massey has been named the Sun Belt Defensive Player of the Year, head coach Kermit Davis earned Coach of the Year honors for the second straight season and three Blue Raiders were named to the All-Sun Belt teams, as announced on Wednesday by the league office.

Senior guard Marcos Knight was named to the All-Sun Belt First Team, while Massey and senior guard Raymond Cintron each took home third-team honors. The Blue Raiders earned three all-conference nods for the second time since joining the Sun Belt in 2000-01, matching the three selections from last season. Prior to that, the last time at least three Blue Raiders were named to all-conference teams was in 1989 when MT had two on the All-OVC First Team and one on the second team.

Massey is one of the key reasons MT's defense is ranked 13th nationally and 3-point defense also is ranked 13th in the country. He helped the Blue Raiders limited their conference opponents to 60 points or less in 16 games, ranking first in the conference in assist-to-turnover ratio (1.9), fourth in assists (3.3) and seventh in steals (1.5). The Germantown, Md., native leads MT with 101 assists and 48 steals this year. He scored double figures in eight games this year, with a season-high 17 points, including career-best seven field goals, against Vanderbilt. It marks the first all-conference recognition for Massey.

Knight has been one of the top players in the Sun Belt throughout the season, leading the Blue Raiders to 16 straight victories, a 27-4 overall record and a 19-1 league mark. The Rentz, Ga., native leads MT with 12.6 points and 5.6 rebounds per game. He has scored double figures 26 times this season and 50 times in his two-year career as a Blue Raider. He ranks among the league's top 20 in five different categories, including scoring (16th), rebounding (17th), field goal percentage (14th), assists (15th) and defensive rebounding (11th). Knight has been MT's leading-scorer 20 times this

season, scoring a career-high 23 points at Arkansas State, one of four performances where he posted at least 20 points. Knight has started all but two games over the past two seasons and it marks his second all-conference award after earning all-league second-team accolades last year. He becomes the fifth Blue Raider to earn first-team honors, and it marks the first time in school history MT has had a player on the Sun Belt's first team in back-to-back seasons (LaRon Dendy, 2012).

Cintron has been MT's sharpshooter for the past two years, leading the league in 3-point field goal percentage this year (.441). The San Juan, Puerto Rico, native ranks fifth in 3-pointers per game (2.2) while leading the Blue Raiders with 67 treys this season. His 3-point field goal percentage this year ranks fourth in MT history and in just two seasons, his 43.6 career 3-point shooting is third in the school annals, and his 134 career triples are seventh all-time for the Blue Raiders. He scored a career-high 22 points at Akron while hitting a career-best six treys against Troy in MT's 52-point victory. He has recorded 13 double-figure scoring performances this year and 28 in his career, leading the Blue Raiders in scoring six times this year. It marks the first conference accolade of his career.

In his 11th season at the helm of the Blue Raiders, Davis' squad carried its success of last season into the 2012-13 campaign. MT has already tied its program record of 27 wins, set last season, and the 19 conference victories are not only a school record but also a Sun Belt record. The current 16-game winning streak is the longest in school history and ranks second nationally, while the eight-game road winning streak also ranks as a program-best. The Blue Raiders also rank fifth in the country with 54 wins over the past two seasons.

Davis became the Sun Belt's all-time winningest coach on Feb. 16 with his 113th league win and is MT's all-time winningest coach as well. Since Davis took the reins for the 2002-03 campaign he has led the Blue Raiders to more conference road victories than any other Sun Belt program and the second-most road wins in college basketball over the past two seasons.

Davis' squad has been recognized nationally this season for its No. 25 RPI, receiving 51 votes in the current USA Today Coaches Poll, putting the Blue Raiders just eight votes outside the top 25. It marks his third SBC coaching accolade, as he also won it in 2003 and 2012. He is one of just three coaches to earn the honor three times, along with Gene Bartow and Ronnie Arrow. Davis becomes the first SBC coach since Matt Kilcullen in 1994 and 1995 to earn back-to-back honors. Kilcullen, however, took home honors with two different teams - Jacksonville and WKU. The last time a coach took home two straight honors with the same school was J.D. Barnett (VCU) in 1983 and 1984.

The Blue Raiders look to make it 17 straight wins as they enter the Sun Belt tournament on Saturday. MT will take on the winner of the Louisiana-North Texas game on Saturday at 6:30 p.m. at Summit Arena in Hot Springs, Ark. The game will air on CSS locally.

Player of the Year
Augustine Rubit, South Alabama

Defensive Player of the Year
Bruce Massey, Middle Tennessee

Freshman of the Year
Shawn Long, Louisiana-Lafayette

Coach of the Year
Kermit Davis, Middle Tennessee

First Team All-Sun Belt Conference
Greg Gantt (Florida Atlantic, Sr., Guard)
Tymell Murphy (FIU, Jr., Forward)
Elfrid Payton (Louisiana-Lafayette, So., Guard)
Marcos Knight (Middle Tennessee, Sr., Guard)
Augustine Rubit (South Alabama, Jr., Forward)

Second Team All-Sun Belt Conference
Brandon Peterson (Arkansas State, Sr., Forward)
Stefan Moody (Florida Atlantic, Fr., Guard)
Shawn Long (Louisiana-Lafayette, Fr., Forward)
Tony Mitchell (North Texas, So., Forward)
T.J. Price (WKU, So., Guard)

Third Team All-Sun Belt Conference
Will Neighbour (UALR, Jr., Forward)
Trey Finn (Arkansas State, Sr., Guard)
Raymond Cintron (Middle Tennessee, Sr., Guard)
Bruce Massey (Middle Tennessee, Sr., Guard)
George Fant (WKU, So., Forward)

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