Blue Raiders Hold Off FIU 71-69

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FOUR STRAIGHT: Middle Tennessee's 71-69 win over Florida International tonight is its fourth victory in a row. That is the longest streak by the Blue Raiders since the 1999-00 season. The last time MT won five straight also came during the 1999-00 campaign. **PARHAM EQUALS PERSONAL BEST:**Junior point guard Eric Parham equaled his career-high with 11 assists tonight against FIU. Parham also had 11 assists earlier this season against UT-Martin. **HOT FROM THREE:** Junior John Humphrey continues to shoot the ball well from behind the arc. Over the last four games, Humphrey has connected on 10 of 21 shots from three-point range (.476), including 2-for-5 tonight against FIU. Humphrey has hit at least two threes in four straight contests. **ALL ALONE IN THIRD:**Tonight's win over FIU moves Middle Tennessee into sole possession of third place in the East division with a mark of 5-5. If the season ended today, the Blue Raiders would open the Sun Belt Conference Tournament on March 1 at 4:30 PM against Denver - the No. 6 seed in the West. **THIS -N' THAT:** Middle Tennessee improved its record to 9-2 at home this season - Tonight's win over FIU was the Blue Raiders' first over the Golden Panthers since the 1990-91 campaign - The Blue Raiders are back to .500 (11-11) for the first time since Dec. 20 - The Blue Raiders are now 61-16 under Randy Wiel when leading at intermission - MT has now hit at least one three-pointer in 180 straight games - Freshman Charlie Anderson was solid again tonight by collected eight points on a perfect 3-for-3 shooting to go along with seven boards (the second most for him this year) - The 12 turnovers by MT tonight was its fewest since having 12 at Tennessee - MT is 11-1 this year when leading with 5:00 left in the game - John Humphrey collected his team-leading 14th dunk tonight - Tommy Gunn fouled out for the second time this season when he left the game with 9:00 left to play - The Blue Raiders out-rebounded their opponent for the 11th time this season. ***QUOTES*** **MT Forward William Pippen:** In the second half [FIU] definitely turned the defense up on us. We weren't surprised. We knew they had one more run left in them because FIU is a very good club. We knew they were going to come at us in the end and we just tried to withstand it. Tonight, we beat a very good team and moved into third place. Now we are looking at second. **MT Guard Eric Parham:** We knew we had to win this game because of the standings for the tournament. This win gave us a charge going into two

important conference road games. **MT Forward Steven Jackson:** Tonight was a big win because it brought us to .500 in the conference and .500 overall. This will give us a lot of momentum going into the end of the Sun Belt race. I think with this momentum, we could come in and win it all. **MT Head Coach Randy Weil:** We started off the second half playing good, but then we went into a drop. We were getting shots but not converting them. Then, Slavtchev came in off the bench and hit three big threes. Of course he was covered, but he made them. I know Florida International, they everybody like that. Because of the way they play, they zone and keep the tempo down. You cannot get out and run on them. There have very few fast breaks. I thought in the second half, [FIU] played well. I thought we had the better first half, offensively and defensively. If we keep playing this way, hopefully we will get two wins in Arkansas. If that happens, we might be looking at finishing second in the conference. **FIU Head Coach Donnie Marsh:** It was a hard fought game, but Middle [Tennessee] came out and dictated tempo early on. They got out in transition, which is something we really didn't want them to do because they are very good when they are able to get out and run. I'm proud of my kids because they fought and battled back and gave us a chance to tie or win the game.

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