Blue Raiders Win Fifth Straight at Home

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LAST GAME FOR NOSSE, WILKES: Tonight's win over Denver marked the final home game for seniors Lee Nosse and Dee Wilkes. Nosse, a member of the 1,000-point club at MT, closed out his home career with 11 points and four rebounds. Wilkes, who is just in his second year at MT, finished with three points and two rebounds. **BLUE RAIDERS CLINCH THIRD:** Middle Tennessee clinched third place in the East Division of the Sun Belt Conference with tonight's win over Denver. It marks the best finish in the conference for the Blue Raiders. Middle Tennessee will face the No. 6 seed (Denver or South Alabama) in the West in the opening round of the Sun Belt Tournament on March 1. **ELEVEN HOME WINS:** Tonight's victory over the Pioneers helped the Blue Raiders close out their home schedule with an impressive 11-2 mark. The 11 home wins marks the most by the Blue Raiders since collecting 11 during the 1997-98 campaign. That year the Blue Raiders were also 11-2 at the Glass House. **GUNN HEATING UP:** Over the last two games, sophomore Tommy Gunn has been carrying the load for the Blue Raiders. During that span, Gunn is averaging 17.5 points, 6.0 rebounds and has made 9 of 15 shots from the field (.600). Gunn finished with a game-high 17 points to lead the Blue Raiders over Denver tonight. **ONE SHY OF 900:** Tonight's win over Denver was the 899th all-time victory for the Middle Tennessee basketball program. One more victory would give the Blue Raiders 900 wins. **THIS -N' THAT:** The Blue Raiders are now 63-16 under Randy Wiel when leading at the half - Tommy Gunn hit double figures in scoring for the 30th time in his career and the 17th time this season - John Humphrey equaled his career-high with four three-pointers against Denver - The Blue Raiders are now 10-3 this season when out-rebounding their opponent - Middle Tennessee's 40.9 percent shooting from three-point range tonight was its best percentage since hitting 41.7 percent against IUPUI-Fort Wayne - a span

of five games - MT has now won five straight games at the Murphy Center. **GAME QUOTES MT Head Coach Randy Wiel:**

At the beginning of the season, and rightfully so, everybody picked us to finish dead last among the twelve teams. Right now, we cannot finish worse than fifth and third in our division. Of course, Western [Kentucky] and Little Rock are ahead of us and deservedly so. I think we came a long way from where we were predicted to finish. We played very good at home and struggled on the road, just like a lot of teams. I think it's maturity that counts on the road when you tighten up and win the close ones. We have won every game at home except for two. One of those was in triple overtime and the other was to the strongest team in the conference. We have beaten everybody else in the conference. By no means does that mean we are the best team in the conference. It means we have closed the gap and we can play with anybody. In a tournament, anybody can win. **MT Guard John Humphrey:**

I think we have come a long way since the beginning of the season. We have matured a lot and we are playing more as a team. **On the game at WKU:**

I think we are going to surprise a lot of people. **MT Guard Dee Wilkes:**

On senior night:

It felt really good to have that kind of applause. I had a lot of family here tonight. I just wanted to stay focused, and luckily we got a win. **MT Center Lee Nosse:**

On senior night:

It was emotional. It is something that probably won't sink in until the end of the season. It was something I really didn't expect with the crowd cheering. **Denver Head Coach Terry Carroll:**

I thought that we let our offense dictate our overall game. We came out and missed shots early and didn't make anything happen on the defensive end. When MT went on its little run and got its offense flow going, it really picked them up at the defensive end. We just stood around and expected somebody to step up and make something happen. As we all know, that is not the best way for our team to have a chance to win.

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