



# Blue Raiders welcome two in-state rivals

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# A study on Self



in [flash]

An editorially independent newspaper

# Middle Tennessee State University SIDELINES

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## Seniors gear up for graduation

By Matt Anderson  
Staff Writer

After he graduates Dec. 18, Joel Price is headed for south Florida.

He's not going for the sunshine but for the techno music scene.

Price, a recording industry major, doesn't have a job yet, but he's confident he'll find a way to break into the competitive radio industry as a disc jockey.

It's taken him five years to graduate (with some time off), and during that time, he's gotten DJing at local clubs and at 88.3-FM WMTS, MTSU's student-run station.

Price is only one of 1,568 students expected to graduate this semester. He said he is

happy with his experience at MTSU.

"The recording industry is a really good department here," Price said. "They did everything they could to help me. They could do a better job of tutoring and advising here at MTSU."

Although he hasn't gone through MTSU's Career and Employment Center, he has made some contacts.

"I've been applying to a couple of places and e-mailing radio stations. It's hard to get on the radio in the U.S. There's very few dedicated techno stations."

Of 34 December graduates who have registered with the Career and Employment Center, 28 have jobs, according to Nicole Grant, a secretary at the Career and Employment

Center. Sixteen of those jobs are internships.

Grant said most students wait a few months after graduation before working through the center.

"It seems after two to three months students realize the job market isn't what they thought it would be," Grant said. "We don't want students to settle. We want them to get the job they wanted four years ago."

Alumni can come to the center any time after graduation. Then they fill out a form to put their resume into the e-recruiting online database. There are currently 3,398 students active in the system.

"We'll pull students' resumes who fit that [employers' requirements], and we send

See Graduates, 2

### Grad tickets hard to come by

By Jason Cox  
Editor in Chief

While December graduates will have to choose eight people to give graduation tickets to, students who graduate in May or later may not have to face this choice.

Carol White, Coordinator for Academic Affairs, said university officials are discussing ways to avoid the ticket system, including an outdoor ceremony at Floyd Stadium or having two ceremonies.

See Tickets, 2

Murfreesboro, Tenn.



Photo submitted

The MTSU drumline plays at this year's Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York.

## Drumline wins national contest

By Alex Miller  
Staff Writer

MTSU's drumline took first place at the Marching and Percussion Festival held in conjunction with the Percussive Arts Society International Convention at the Renaissance Hotel in Nashville Nov. 12.

"I am very proud of the drumline for all of their hard work and dedication," Lalo Davila, director of the drumline, said. "Great players" made the victory possible.

Other highlights of the contest included MTSU's winning first place for its marching snare line, senior Darrell Thompson's winning sixth place in the marmimba competition and sophomore Matt Jordan's taking

first place for his timpani solo.

"It is pretty impressive to me that a first-semester sophomore could win top timpani," Davila said.

Michigan State University's drumline gave MTSU stiff competition. MTSU edged out MSU by one-tenth of a point to win with a 90.75. The top three schools all scored above 90.

According to Davila, every school was a challenge.

"They all worked as hard as we did," he said.

Davila is no stranger to success at PASIC. This year's win is his second at MTSU, having taken first place in 2001 also.

The University of North

See Drumline, 2

## Test scores in; most schools make grade

By Hillary Robson  
Staff Writer

Every year, students from third through 12th grade are tested on their educational levels and skills by the state of Tennessee in order to evaluate student and school performance. This year, 81 percent of all Tennessee schools tested at or above the acceptable level as set by the No Child Left Behind initiative.

The tests also identify at-risk schools, schools that fail to meet NCLB guidelines for two years in a row.

There were two at-risk schools in Rutherford County,

Central Middle School and Smyrna Middle School.

These at-risk schools have been labeled as a "School Improvement I" school, which means that there are greater incentives for overall improvement and increased federal funds to encourage growth.

Parents of at-risk school students have the option to remove their children from their current schools and transfer to a school with higher ratings.

Rutherford County schools targeted for improvement in test scores and graduation rates are Oakland High School and LaVergne High School.

Target schools are schools that have had their first year of lower-than-acceptable scores and need to show improvement within the next school year in order not to be identified as "high priority" for improvement.

Rutherford County schools did not meet requirements for "Adequate Yearly Progress," which is the definitive goal for 2014, with 100 percent proficiency.

Overall the schools did perform at or above the national average.

NCLB began in the 2002-2003 school year, setting concrete national standards for

student learning and educational goals. The initiative intends to have students reach 100 percent proficiency in math, reading and language arts by 2014 and meet exemplary attendance and graduation standards.

The results, which are available online at [www.tennessee.gov/education](http://www.tennessee.gov/education), are issued in a "Report Card" format that compile test scores, attendance rates, ACT scores, graduation rates, grade promotion, writing assessment and dropout rates and are organized by subgroups that include

See Testing, 3

## Hawaii



Photo by Jay Richardson | Staff Photographer

A group of Polynesian dancers from Atlanta, Ga., performed at the Honors College R & R Series' Pacific-themed party last night at the Honors College Amphitheater. This event was the last in this semester's R & R series.

## Campus Rec offering trips for spring

By Katie Garland  
Staff Writer

The Campus Recreation Center is offering students two chances this year to get away for Spring Break.

One option is a diving trip to Roatan, Honduras.

The cost of the trip is \$1,550 for students and \$1,600 for faculty and staff.

While this may seem a little expensive, it is a good deal for the great package being offered, according to Ray Wiley, associate director of Campus Recreation.

"It's a great trip, an excellent package, high adventure and a lot of fun," Wiley said.

The cost of the trip includes seven nights lodging, three tank dives for six days, one night dive, unlimited shore diving, weights and belts, three meals a day, round trip airfare, exit taxes and ground transportation.

Early Bird Registration for the trip, which ends Dec. 10, comes with a \$50 discount on the price of the trip.

The second trip, a high-adventure trip to Costa Rica is also being offered by Campus Recreation.

The cost for this trip is \$1,300 for students and \$1,400 for faculty and staff.

Activities in this trip include watching a volcano erupt, strolling through a forest of gargantuan trees, whitewater rafting, hiking through the jungle, mountain biking down an ancient trail, riding horses on

See Spring, 2



This week's poll question at [www.mtsusidelines.com](http://www.mtsusidelines.com)

What do you think of the decision to retain Coach Andy McCollum?

# CRIME LOG

Compiled by Melissa Bowman - Associate News Editor

- Wednesday, Nov. 17 - 7:25 a.m.**  
**Wright Music Building**  
 Burglary  
 Someone called to advise police of a possible burglary from Room 150.
- Wednesday, Nov. 17 - 10:07 a.m.**  
**Peck Hall**  
 Theft  
 Subject called and wanted a report in reference to items stolen from Peck Hall.
- Wednesday, Nov. 17 - 2:54 p.m.**  
**Reynolds Hall**  
 Harassment  
 Subject received a disturbing phone call and requested an officer.
- Wednesday, Nov. 17 - 7:00 p.m.**  
**Gore Hall**  
 Theft  
 Subject called to report that her roommate's laptop was stolen.
- Thursday, Nov. 18 - 3:25 a.m.**  
**Greek Row**  
 Vandalism  
 Complainant advised that his tires may be slashed, but he was unable to determine at the time if his tires actually had been slashed. He thought the air may just have been let out of them. He said he would call police when he had further information.
- Friday, Nov. 19 - 12:16 a.m.**  
**MTSU Boulevard**  
 Underage consumption  
 Two subjects were involved in underage consumption of alcohol.
- Friday, Nov. 19 - 5:10 a.m.**  
**Gore Hall**  
 Attempted suicide  
 A non-student cut her wrists in the bathroom of Room 210. The on-call dean and housing dean were called.
- Saturday, Nov. 20 - 2:53 p.m.**  
**James E. Walker Library**  
 Vagrancy  
 Library staff reported that someone was misusing the computers. A trespass warning was issued.
- Sunday, Nov. 21 - 4:45 p.m.**  
**Sims Hall**  
 Theft  
 Subject reported his roommate was stealing his textbooks and selling them.
- Sunday, Nov. 21 - 5:59 p.m.**  
**Cummings Hall**  
 Theft  
 Subject found room door unlocked with clothes, CDs, etc. taken from the room.
- Sunday, Nov. 21 - 6:31 p.m.**  
**Cummings lot**  
 Accident  
 Subject reported her vehicle had been involved in an accident and the bumper was missing.
- Sunday, Nov. 21 - 9:37 p.m.**  
**Campus Recreation Center**  
 Theft  
 An individual's wallet was taken.
- Tuesday, Nov. 23 - 7:40 a.m.**  
**Judd/Sims Hall lot**  
 A vehicle was dented.
- Tuesday, Nov. 23 - 12:50 p.m.**  
**Murphy Center**  
 Theft  
 A bicycle was stolen.
- Tuesday, Nov. 23 - 2:42 p.m.**  
**Greenland Drive lot B**  
 A blue Toyota Corolla was involved in an accident.
- Wednesday, Nov. 24 - 9:08 a.m.**  
**James E. Walker Library**  
 Subject was driving on a suspended license. The vehicle was towed by McCluskey's.
- Wednesday, Nov. 24 - 9:34 a.m.**  
**Nicks Hall lot**  
 Vandalism  
 A beer bottle was thrown into a window.
- Wednesday, Nov. 24 - 10:02 a.m.**  
**Campus Recreation Center lot**  
 A car was hit the night before.
- Thursday, Nov. 25 - 12:11 a.m.**  
**Greenland Drive**  
 Omar Benton, of Murfreesboro, was charged with public intoxication and simple possession of marijuana.
- Friday, Nov. 26 - 12:41 a.m.**  
**Rutherford Boulevard**  
 David C. Batey, of Liberty, Tenn., was charged with driving on a suspended license.
- Saturday, Nov. 27 - 12:38 p.m.**  
**McHenry Hall**  
 Victim/suspect was depressed and threatened suicide. Lisa Jackson, area coordinator, responded.
- Saturday, Nov. 27 - 1:35 p.m.**  
**Beasley Hall**  
 Vagrancy  
 There was a possible domestic dispute and assault.
- Sunday, Nov. 28 - 12:20 a.m.**  
**Beta Theta Pi fraternity house**  
 Vandalism  
 The light fixtures on all of the cement poles in the rear of the house were broken upon students' return from Thanksgiving break.
- Sunday, Nov. 28 - 10:17 a.m.**  
**Clement Hall**  
 Burglary  
 Student had a Playstation 2, DVDs and possibly computer parts missing from his room when he returned from Thanksgiving break.
- Sunday, Nov. 28 - 2:30 p.m.**  
**Nicks Hall**  
 Theft  
 A Compaq desktop computer was stolen.
- Sunday, Nov. 28 - 4:03 p.m.**  
**Clement Hall**  
 Burglary  
 Subject's room was broken into over Thanksgiving break.
- Sunday, Nov. 28 - 4:29**  
**Gore Hall**  
 Theft  
 Subject had a laptop and DVD player stolen while out of town.
- Monday, Nov. 29 - 12:15 a.m.**  
**Reynolds Hall**  
 A girl passed out on the second floor of Reynolds Hall. The subject had a hot flash and passed out on the floor. Ambulance service and an officer was dispatched. The student refused to be transferred to the hospital.
- Monday, Nov. 29 - 12:51 a.m.**  
**Champion Way**  
 Subject was driving without a license.
- Monday, Nov. 29 - 10:24 a.m.**  
**Alumni Memorial Gym**  
 Theft  
 A computer was stolen.
- Monday, Nov. 29 - 11:56 a.m.**  
**Murphy Center**  
 Theft  
 Complainant said her bicycle was stolen.
- Monday, Nov. 29 - 1:25 p.m.**  
**Sims Hall**  
 Vandalism  
 Someone set a flier on fire, causing damage to the wall.
- Monday, Nov. 29 - 1:50 p.m.**  
**Judd Hall**  
 Burglary  
 A room was broken into over the weekend.
- Monday, Nov. 29 - 1:54 p.m.**  
**Nicks Hall**  
 Burglary  
 A window was broken, and it looked as if someone tried to open it.
- Tuesday, Nov. 30 - 9:42 a.m.**  
**Off Campus**  
 Complainant said her vehicle was hit by another vehicle in the old Middle Tennessee Baptist Church parking lot.
- To report a crime, call Campus Police at 898-2424.**

# Graduates: Some careers beginning

Continued from 1

their resumes," Grant said. Out of the 613 undergraduate survey respondents who graduated during the 2003-04 school year, 281 had accepted jobs, or 46 percent. In the College of Basic and Applied Sciences, 72 percent of respondents have jobs. In the College of Business, 56 percent of respondents have jobs. In the College of Liberal Arts, 37 percent of respondents have jobs.

certified public accountant.

Mullenax said her on-the-job experience is what prepared her for the work force.

"Like most careers, it is very difficult for college to prepare you for a position in accounting," Mullenax said. "I feel MTSU prepared me as well as they could have (in terminology, methods and general understanding). The workplace is nothing like school."

She added that MTSU could do more to help students find jobs. A friend of hers graduated in 2003 and still works at Papa

John's.

"[Other schools] practically guarantee positions to each one of their students," Mullenax said. "The faculty is much more involved with the students. The accounting head knew everyone by name, and you could tell they were proud of their students. They walked around and greeted each recruiter."

"MTSU's event felt very impersonal. The students expressed to me how afraid they were that they would not find a position," she said. ♦

# Tickets: Outside ceremony considered

Continued from 1

The obvious problem with using the football stadium, White said, is the possibility of inclement weather as well as cold weather in December and excessively hot weather in August.

Still, "A lot of schools do outside ceremonies," White said. "I know Vanderbilt does."

For the 1,560 or so students graduating, White said, the expected problems with tickets

have already crossed her desk.

"We have some who don't need all eight of their tickets and some who require extra," White said.

At least one student has found a way to make sure everyone who wants to see him graduate can - buying tickets from fellow graduates.

Jesse Cogswell, a finance major graduating this month, posted signs around campus offering \$5 per ticket for graduates who were not going to

need all of theirs.

Cogswell, who is from Nashville, said he needs "probably in the neighborhood of 40" tickets for friends and family, said people he knew who would not be walking the stage at graduation gave him all of their tickets, and that two more people who called him sold all of their tickets to him.

Cogswell suggested that, if the university continues with having a single ceremony in Murphy Center, that one way to

alleviate complaints would be to screen graduates and make an effort to find out who needs more tickets, who won't be using all of theirs and who won't be using any of them.

"The ones who have sold me the tickets are the ones who aren't walking at all," Cogswell said, "so I'm sure they use an estimate on how many people are walking and I bet they're highballing it." ♦

# Spring: Honduras trip planned

Continued from 1

the beach or just laying around in the sun.

Junior recreation major Keena Clark went with Campus Recreation on a Spring Break trip to the Cayman Islands two years ago.

While on the trip, Clark had the opportunity to take a night dive for her first official open water dive.

During the dive, she had a chance to play with an octopus and sleeping sea turtles.

On another dive, Clark literally came face to face with a shark.

"It was an awesome experience I will never forget," Clark said. "It was great diving and beautiful sights."

To those students who are thinking about going on one of these trips, but have concerns

about the price, Clark recommends her method of payment.

"Ask for the trip for a Christmas present, or seniors can ask for a graduation present," Clark said. "That's what I did last time."

Clark is planning to attend this year's trip to Honduras.

More information on the Campus Recreation's Spring Break trips can be found at [www.mtsu.edu/~camprec](http://www.mtsu.edu/~camprec). ♦

# Drumline:

Continued from 1

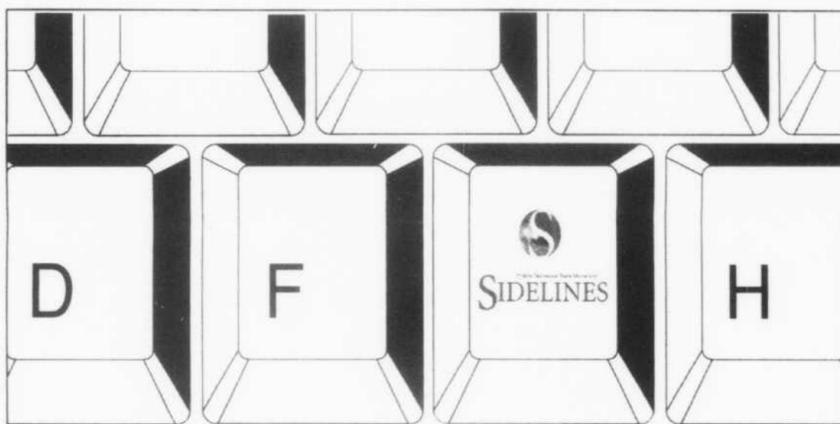
Texas won top honors at PASIC three times under his direction.

The Percussive Arts Society is the world's largest percussion organization, and PASIC is the world's largest percussion convention.

The Marching and Percussion Festival features more than a hundred high school and college drumlines every year.

In the high school competition, Nashville's Father Ryan High School took first place in the Stand Still competition, and Murfreesboro's Siegel High School took second place.

Siegel also won Best Standstill Bass Drum Line, and Father Ryan won Best Standstill Snare Line, Tenor Line and Front Ensemble. ♦



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# OPINIONS

## From the Editorial Board

### Leave political debate out of the holidays

As a humble group of blue kids living in a red state, we understand that the holiday season can be taxing (no pun intended) for lovable losers such as ourselves.

With this in mind, we urge students to follow perhaps the most important advice this space has had to offer in a long time: Don't bring up politics at the dinner table during the holidays. Just don't do it.

Nothing makes Mama cry like seeing her prized yams all over Uncle Bobby's face, so take heed.

Whatever you do, don't start the fight, lest you have no one to blame but yourself later. Your relatives aren't going to agree with the radical, communist notion that the richest country in the world can afford to provide health care to its own people if it would only tame the pharmaceutical industry, so don't even try.

If you really need to complain to a family member, track down that one aunt or uncle nobody talks to. Better yet, bring him/her to dinner. There's nothing like long-standing awkwardness to top the Christmas tree (or your menorah, we don't care).

When your other uncle starts talking about how immigrants are driving down property values and are menacing to our nubile daughters, don't roll your eyes or otherwise put on an air of superiority. It is this type of blatant condescension that tends to leave innocent mashed potatoes running down your cheek.

And stay away from the political gifts unless the person is on the same political wavelength as you. Trust us: Uncle Bobby isn't going to see the humor in the Al Franken book on tape you got him from the truck stop on the way to Dyersburg, Tenn.

Don't worry Reds, we haven't left you out: Don't get Aunt Kelly (you know, the one that's always borrowing money from your parents) a stuffed, talking Bill Clinton from the Circle K. Consider a gas card instead.

And for the rest of us, well... after the Republicans run this country into the ground, destroy our rights in the courtroom as well as the bedroom and convince the world that we're all warmongering brutes, at least we can say "I told you so." ◆

## From the Opinions Editor

### Homosexual preacher should keep her pulpit

According to a Methodist ecclesiastical court, homosexuals are not allowed to preach the word of God.

Said God has accused Irene Elizabeth Stroud, a minister with the First United Methodist Church of Germantown, Pa., of "practices incompatible with Christian teachings." The practice in question is Stroud's homosexuality - specifically the fact that she is living with another lesbian.

Stroud told her congregation of her sexual orientation in April 2003 and is very well liked by the 1,000-member church. If the 13 ministers presiding over her trial find her guilty, she will lose her ministry. She could, however, continue working for a church as a lay associate.

That's probably small comfort to Stroud, who takes her faith and the preaching of it quite seriously.

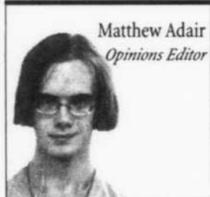
I fail to understand why a church should feel it necessary to make an issue of a minister's sexuality. Those who point to the ancient Hebrew books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy for their condemnations of homosexuality seem to gloss over the fact that most Christians do not follow very many of the rules inscribed in those two books: to press one or two statements as God's law while ignoring the rest strikes me as being more than a little ridiculous.

The ministers trying Stroud are free to decide as they want to. A church is a private organization and, as such, is not obliged to be as inclusive as a public, government-maintained program or organization.

But to strip Stroud of her ministry for something as simple and as central to being human as her preference in romantic relationships sends a message that the heads of this religious community not only ignore the goodwill and openness of Stroud's congregation, but that a person's private life is more important than their desire to spread their faith to others.

Who we love should not interfere with what we choose to believe in. The ministers trying Stroud would do well to step aside and allow the Methodist preacher to do what she was ordained to do: Spread the word of God. ◆

Matthew Adair is a sophomore art education major and can be reached at matt.adair@gmail.com.



Matthew Adair  
Opinions Editor

## Learn languages; expand your mind

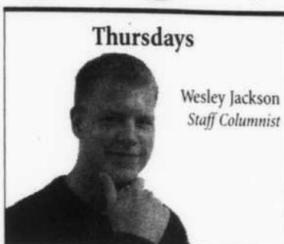
If you ever needed a reason for studying a foreign language, search Google or some other search engine sometime. You'll get an incredible number of matching sites from people dying to persuade you into spending years of your life perfecting the flourishing nasal flares of the French tongue, the guttural grunts of the German Sprach, or expressing the sentimental sonorous sighs of the Spanish honor.

If you search the Internet long enough you'll find that rare breed of a scholar who still believes Latin is God's language. Of course it'd behoove you to learn this language above all else since it's impossible to see how you'll get into to heaven without it.

Actually, learning a second or even a third language is becoming increasingly necessary for economic and business purposes. We're not just out to impress the girls at the water fountain anymore, fellas.

Because the global economy is becoming more and more interconnected, having a second language gives your professional resume a real boost.

It makes you an asset that is not easily dismissed in today's marketplace, almost no matter what field



Thursdays

Wesley Jackson  
Staff Columnist

you're in.

Now, we're all busy college students who don't have time to throw away on useless elective classes. So if we're going to spend some time studying a language, which should it be?

As much as I hate to admit this, French is one of the most practical languages to learn. According to Central Oregon Community College, French is more widely spoken worldwide than either Spanish or German.

It is the language of art, theater, cuisine, the fashion industry and, yes, personal automobile products. It's also the key language for the European Union, the globe's biggest trade sector.

French is a very beautiful language, useful for saying unpleasant things in an irresistibly attractive way.

In other words, it's the language of diplomacy.

German is not the language of seeking.

The curse of the German people is that their wonderful thoughts, no matter how deeply felt, no matter how brilliantly articulated, no matter how emotionally sympathetic they are in themselves, always come out the same - like death threats.

For some strange reason I have a special affinity for this language. I love it, but even I must admit it sounds harsh or sometimes like it was developed by a race of people suffering from perpetual flu symptoms.

Be that as it may, German is the language of philosophy and education in many ways, for those interested in academics. It's also the main language of Europe. Right now the United States is doing more business with Germany than any other European country, and this is partly due to the medical exchanges across the Atlantic which many of the large pharmaceutical companies are based out of Germany.

As for Spanish, well, what's there to say? It has a aristocracy supported by notable aristocracy such as Charles V, the Spanish emperor who shaped 16th Europe. It's a language of longing, of passion, of

The benefit of learning this language would primarily be working with new immigrants into the United States and living in areas such as New York, California, and Nevada with large Hispanic populations.

It is not for no reason that many cultural analysts have said that the 21st century will be the Asian century. As the West interacts more with China, Japan, and the other countries of the Far East, any handle that Westerners can get on these languages will be invaluable to themselves and whomever they're working for. The same is true concerning Middle Eastern languages.

In a world where everyone is gradually adapting to English, the need to become proficient in other specialty languages is greater. Being familiar with a foreign language increases personal marketability within the global economy and builds bridges between cultures.

And yes, in the United States at least, you always look cooler if you know another language. ◆

Wesley Jackson is a senior English major and can be reached at wtj2b@mtsu.edu.

## Misunderstanding rights erodes right to use them

Within the girls' section of one of the dorms on campus, there has been a war of words lately. This war stems from the controversial posting of the word "condom."

Don't be upset if you haven't heard about it. This petty ordeal had escalated to a level it should never have reached. However, it has had a positive effect as it has made me realize how misunderstood the Bill of Rights (particularly the First Amendment) is today.

In order to understand the First Amendment, you must have some common knowledge of the history of the United States. Most of us have this, from 7th grade history, but allow me to refresh your memory if it has escaped you.

The Bill of Rights was drafted to help ensure that the rights of the people would not be overtaken by the government. This makes sense as the colonies had just gained freedom from the controlling motherland of Great Britain.

The First Amendment has several parts to it. However, I want to focus primarily on the freedom of speech. Speech was included as one of the basic rights to prevent the government from suppressing or punishing citizens who chose to spoke out against the government. The Alien and Sedition Acts implemented by John Adams is a prime example of what America was trying to stray away from.

Citizens today have gotten away from the true meaning. In high school, students are punished for profanity in the classroom. To the curser's disdain, this is not suppressing the right to speech; it is in fact supporting others rights. I think one key element we all seem to forget is that our rights only exist when we don't infringe upon others' rights. Profanity prevents others' from exercising their right to an



(This Title for Rent)

Gretchen Jenkins  
Staff Columnist

uninterrupted education without cursing. Today if you tell someone that he should not say something, a cry of "free speech" can be heard from miles away. No one seems to even think about the boundaries or stop common decency.

I know exactly what you are thinking. "Condom is not a big deal." I completely agree. But there is an exception as it offended someone and it was on university property.

The word "condom" would not have risen to such a level of tension if others' would just look at the big picture. It is a word - a simple word at that.

As the age old saying goes, there are some things worth fighting for. In this case, it should be left alone. If you are going to pick a fight with the freedom of speech, make it one that is worth the uproar.

The First Amendment is a wonderful right. It allows me to write and have this particular column published. It also allows you to write back and completely disagree with everything I have said. That is the beauty of America. Perhaps we should take it all in perspective. ◆

Gretchen Jenkins is a freshman political science major and can be reached at gmj2d@mtsu.edu.

## Risks of street racing outweigh possible thrills

Friday night as I was sitting at my computer I heard the rumble of loud exhaust systems pass my place as is customary on my out of the way street.

It was followed by a sound that I'm not used to, a yelping dog.

The group of racers that commonly drive down my street had hit the neighbor's dog.

After checking the dog and determining that he would be OK, I stood outside talking to my neighbor.

That was when the racers passed again. Apparently hitting someone's pet wasn't enough to keep the racers off my street for the night.

It was the first time I had seen them. I had only heard them before this.

As I watched them swerving somewhat as one car went into the wrong lane to pass his fellow racer, I was horrified by the thought that someone could be driving home while they are racing and end up in a serious accident.

It wouldn't take another car for the racers to hurt themselves. If they were to continue down the street, they could be faced with any number of animals that would do much more damage than a small dog could.

One wrong turn of the steering wheel could have them in the ditch of the narrow road.

So, I must ask, what makes the thrill of the race worth all of the consequences that could come from it?

If you are like me and don't get into racing, let me pose another question.

Why do people insist on speeding through residential areas?

While speed limits may be difficult to follow when you are running late somewhere, is it necessary to go 15 miles an hour or more over the speed limit?

This was another thought that came to me after seeing my neighborhood racers.

The street I live on is filled with children. They play outside, some ride their bikes down the road, and everyday while the children are home most of the vehicles that pass are speeding.

So while you may not be a racer could you still be risking a serious mishap by speeding to your destination?

Most of us are guilty of being in a hurry to get wherever it is we are going and speeding. So, before you press your foot down to go a little faster, ask yourself this question.

Is the risk worth the possible consequences? ◆

Sandi Van Orden is a junior journalism major and can be reached by e-mail slv2e@mtsu.edu.



Sandi's Logic

Sandi Van Orden  
Staff Columnist

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Murfreesboro, TN 37132

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Advertising: 898-2533  
Fax: 904-8193  
www.mtsusidelines.com

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# SPORTS

Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Thursday, December 2, 2004

SIDELINES ♦ 5

## High school football teams invade Floyd Stadium

By Colby Sledge  
Sports Editor

Five high school football champions will be crowned as the TSSAA BlueCross Bowl returns to Floyd Stadium this weekend.

"We're excited to again hold the games on the MTSU campus and look forward to some great high school football action," TSSAA executive director Ronnie Carter said in a press release. "These teams have worked hard to arrive at the BlueCross Bowl and they'll showcase their best talent."

The championship games will begin Friday with the Class 1A championship at 3:30 p.m. when Boyd Buchanan High School takes on Donelson Christian Academy and will conclude with the Class 5A contest on Saturday night.

The BlueCross Bowl will have little financial impact on MTSU, which has hosted the championships since 2000, but Murfreesboro and Rutherford County will likely benefit from the games.

"It's a PR thing," Middle Tennessee associate

athletic director Larry Counts said. "It's a nice gift to the community and the county, because people will come in, stay in motel rooms, eat at restaurants, buy the tanks of gas, maybe do a little shopping while they're here."

MTSU does not have to pay to host the BlueCross Bowl, which will feature teams from across the state. Local powerhouse Riverdale High School will be making its fifth straight appearance in the Class 5A championship game (see page 8 for preview), meaning the Warriors have played at Floyd Stadium every year since the TSSAA unanimously voted to move the games to MTSU.

Although the best high school players from across the state will be in Murfreesboro this weekend, Counts didn't think the championships would have any effect on the Blue Raiders' recruiting tactics.

"I'm sure it's a little plum for our coaching staff, but if our coaches haven't seen these kids or aren't aware of these kids by now, we're doing something bad," Counts joked. ♦

### TSSAA BlueCross Bowl Division I Championships

(All games will be played at Floyd Stadium)

| Friday, Dec. 3                                       | Time      |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Class 1A</b>                                      |           |
| Boyd Buchanan v.<br>Donelson Christian Academy ..... | 3:30 p.m. |
| <b>Class 2A</b>                                      |           |
| Alcoa v. Huntingdon .....                            | 7 p.m.    |
| Saturday, Dec. 4                                     | Time      |
| <b>Class 3A</b>                                      |           |
| Knoxville Fulton v. Greenbrier .....                 | Noon      |
| <b>Class 4A</b>                                      |           |
| Maryville v. Memphis Melrose .....                   | 3:30 p.m. |
| <b>Class 5A</b>                                      |           |
| Franklin v. Riverdale .....                          | 7 p.m.    |

## McCullum not right decision for future

Sports commentary



Mark Emery  
Staff Columnist

Middle Tennessee football will perhaps be entering its most important season next year – and they will have Andy McCollum back at the helm.

The decision by Athletic Director Boots Donnelly has many people scratching their heads, asking themselves, "How can this be?"

I can almost picture myself being on a game show as the announcer asks, "For a million dollars, you must answer this question. What direction are the Blue Raiders moving in?"

"Nowhere," I tentatively reply.

"That is absolutely correct," the host says. "Congratulations: You've won the million dollar prize."

There does not seem to be a reasonable explanation for keeping McCollum as the head coach after he has compiled an overall record of 30-38.

McCullum has only two winning seasons in his six years at the program. Yes, the first year in the Sun Belt Conference the Blue Raiders shared the conference title, but every other year the team has done nothing.

Even in 2001, the year the Blue Raiders won the SBC, they had to share the title with North Texas. Why? Because MT has not beaten the Mean Green in the four meetings between the teams. Guess who has won the conference every year in its four years of existence?

It seems to me the key to winning the SBC would be to beat UNT, and McCollum has been unable to do it.

Other programs are moving in different directions. Notre Dame's Tyrone Willingham was fired Tuesday after three seasons. Willingham's record at Notre Dame was 21-15 and he was still let go.

The University of Florida let Ron Zook go this season after just two-plus seasons. He went on to finish off the season and ended with a record of 23-14.

Ole Miss announced yesterday the firing of David Cutcliffe, who did not "come to an agreement" with athletic director Pete Boone about improving on a 4-7 season.

Even schools the similar size of MTSU are moving on. Utah State axed Mick Denney after five seasons and a 19-37 record. New Mexico State fired head coach Tony Samuels, and the Aggies had the same record as MT this year.

You might think these examples don't really compare to MT's situation because all these teams are in larger conferences (USU and NMSU are moving to the Western Athletic Conference), but it does. Middle Tennessee now plays in Division I-A and is trying to move in a new direction. In order to do this, there should be changes to a program that has done nothing since its first year in the SBC.

Maybe Donnelly knows something the rest of the MT fans don't – or maybe he's just very loyal to McCollum. Donnelly should know how important winning is, because he only had four losing seasons as the head football coach in 20 years at MT. McCollum has four losing seasons in six years.

How can the right direction be McCollum? ♦

Mark Emery is a senior mass communication major and can be reached at mpe2b@mtsu.edu.

## Blue Raiders welcome two in-state rivals

By Katy Hamlett  
Staff Writer

The MT men's basketball team and Tennessee Wesleyan and Tennessee State University as the Blue Raiders continue their four-game homestand this week.

On Thursday night the Blue Raiders will face the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics member Tennessee Wesleyan. The Bulldogs recently suffered an embarrassing 113-62 defeat at Birmingham Southern College.

"Wesleyan is non-Division I, a lot like Lambuth [University]. But you just can't take any team for granted," MT head coach Kermit Davis said.

MT defeated Lambuth at Murphy Center during the season opener 95-54.

"Sometimes these kind of games you play more against yourself," Davis continued. "We just have to keep making progress."

Wesleyan's leading scorer is 6-foot 3-inch freshman forward Zach Connor, who netted 16 points against BSC.

On Sunday MT will host another Tennessee team that hails a little closer to Murfreesboro and has a large interest with many fans.

Sunday's game against TSU will be the teams' first meeting since 2001. The two teams were fierce rivals during MT's days in the Ohio Valley Conference, but the schools have not sustained the tradition since MT made the move to the Sun Belt Conference.

TSU senior center Rod Flowers led the Tigers with 21 in TSU's recent 75-69 victory against Delaware State.

"They've [TSU] got a big front line. They've got very good guards and good depth," Davis said about

the former rival. "They've won four games in a row and they will be a challenge for us."

TSU (4-3) will face Trevecca Nazarene University and Fisk University, teams that Davis predicted the Tigers would defeat, before facing the Blue Raiders on Sunday.

"We are Sunday excited about going into the games. We had two losses on the road that we thought we should have won, so it was really important for us to win Monday night," MT transfer Marcus Morrison said. "I'm new, but these games are a pretty big deal around here, so I'm really looking forward to it."

Morrison added energy to the MT lineup in the second half of a 66-47 victory over Belmont Monday night with two dunks and a layup in a two-minute stretch.

"We're trying to create better depth for our team. I think it could be a plus for us," Davis said about his strategy for utilization of the bench. "I thought when we had Fats [Cuyler], [Jonathan] Loe, and Morrison along with [Alex] Weekes it was good. It really helped us in the second half [of the Belmont game]. We'll play a lot of different guys depending on the size and matchup of the other team."

In addition to MT's deep bench, the 3,000-plus attendance for each game at Murphy Center this season has helped the Blue Raiders stay undefeated at home.

"The student support that we're getting is outstanding," Davis said. "It helps our guys with energy."

The Blue Raiders will host Tennessee Wesleyan at 7 p.m. tonight before facing TSU at 4 p.m. on Sunday. ♦

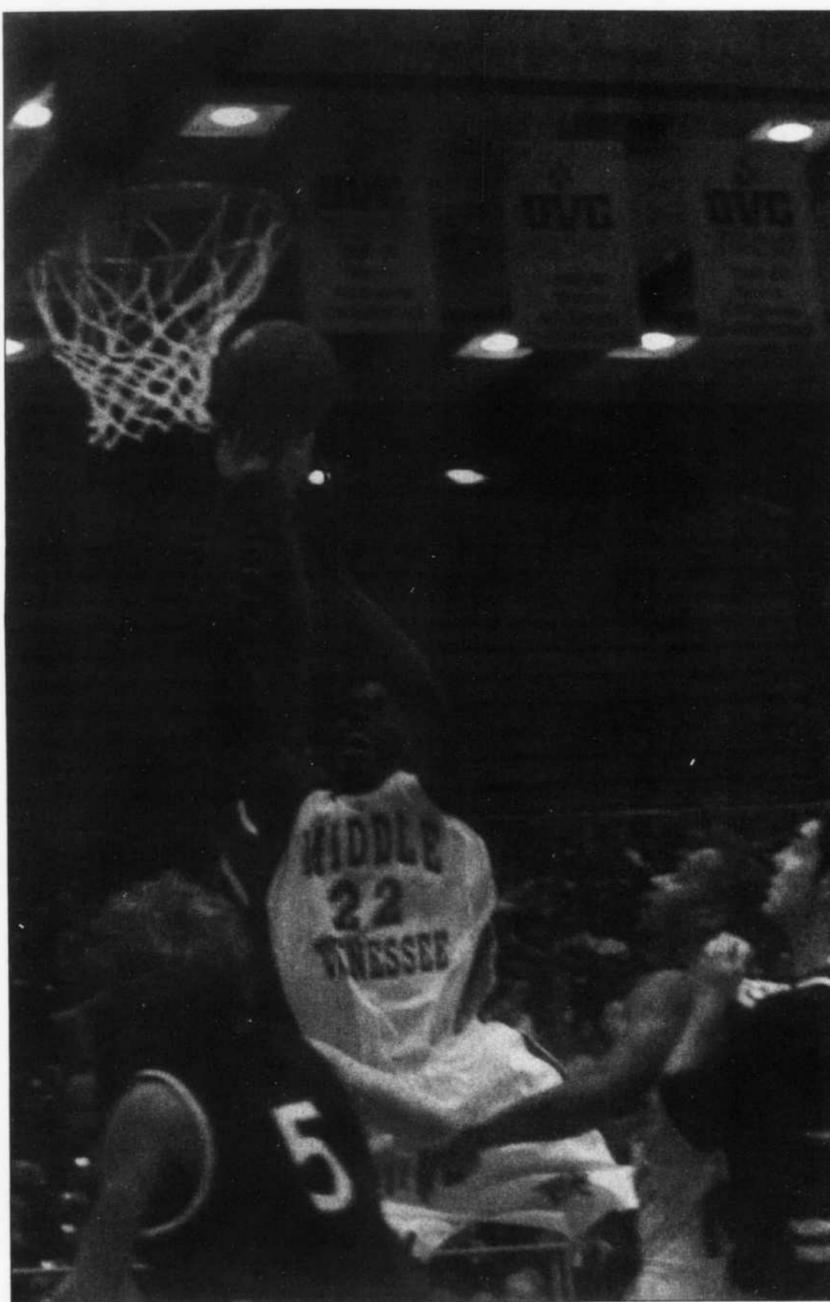


Photo by Steve Cross | Chief Photographer

MT junior Marcus Morrison had nine points in a 66-47 win over Belmont on Monday.

## Road games in Georgia on Lady Raiders' minds

By Katy Hamlett  
Staff Writer

The Lady Raiders will tour the Peach State to play non-conference opponents Georgia State and Georgia Southern.

Today the Raiders are in Atlanta to face Georgia State (0-1) of the Atlantic Sun Conference in the Lady Panthers' first game in two weeks. The Lady Panthers were picked in preseason polls in a tie with Lipscomb University to win the ASC tournament title.

"They are a very athletic team. They win their league most years and go to represent their conference in the postseason NCAA tournament. They're used to winning," MT head coach Stephanie Smith said. "They like to push the ball in transition. We're just going to make sure we take care of the basketball and box out."

The Lady Panthers had a rocky season opener with a 72-30 loss to Georgia Tech on Nov. 19. Senior guard Patechia Hartman, who averaged 18.5 points per game in the 2003-2004 season, was held to just 10 points against the Yellow Jackets.

Following today's game the Lady Raiders will travel to Statesboro, Ga., to take on Georgia Southern (3-2).

The GSU Eagles' last game ended in a 61-50 loss Tuesday night to the No. 6 Georgia Bulldogs. The Eagles held their own against the Southeastern Conference powerhouse for most of the game trailing by only two points with six minutes remaining.

GSU ran out of energy in the last minutes, however, and allowed the Lady Bulldogs to go on a 12-2 run to clinch their victory. GSU was held to 16.7 percent from the free throw line, widening the victory gap for the Lady Bulldogs.

MT's recent 77-74 victory against Wisconsin at the Houston Classic is giving Smith an optimistic outlook on the Lady Raiders' upcoming games.

"Our team is composed of five veterans and four freshmen, so every time we make a substitution, we lose experience immediately," Smith said. "But we played very well against Wisconsin and took several strides forward... then several strides backward with Houston. But that's just how we're going to be this season."

Or maybe not: In a turn of events for the Lady Raiders, MT will be welcoming back senior Ciara Gray at the upcoming games, who initially decided to sit out her senior season due to recurring injuries. After serving as a team manager the first part of the season, Gray decided she would be able to play and finish out her senior year.

"I approached Ciara on Monday and told her we needed her on the court," Smith told MT Media Relations. "Ciara told me she would love to and [Tuesday] was her first official practice as a player and she looked great."

The games in Georgia will be the fourth and fifth contests in MT's six-game road series, which will conclude against Tennessee Tech next Thursday in Cookeville, Tenn. ♦



Photo by Steve Cross | Chief Photographer

MT's Latoya Barclay had four points against Houston.

# Greenbrier looks to unseat Falcons in 3A championship

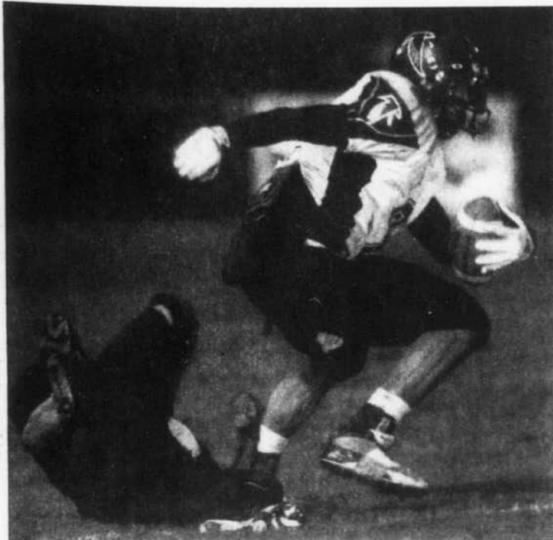


Photo by Amy Smotherman | Knoxville News Sentinel

**By Jon Leffew**  
Asst. Sports Editor

After losing several key components to last year's state championship team, the Fulton Falcons were not expected to contend for another title this year.

Despite playing in one of the toughest regions in the state, the Falcons defeated region rival Austin East two weeks ago and destroyed Smith County last week to clinch a berth in their third straight title game (they lost to Ridgeway in 2002 and defeated Covington last year).

Joining the Falcons in this year's game will be the Greenbrier Bobcats, a team that made it to the semifinals last year before losing to Covington.

Both teams are experienced

and talented, so the first game in Saturday's action at Floyd Stadium looks to be an interesting one.

The Falcons are led on offense by quarterback Ish Young and receiver Elliot Bishop.

Bishop, who transferred from, ironically, Austin East High School, caught three touchdowns and intercepted a pass in the team's victory last week.

The senior averages 20 yards per catch and has 646 receiving yards and nine touchdowns for the year.

"Elliot's just a playmaker," Fulton head coach Buck Coatney told the *Knoxville News Sentinel*. "He's a great team player, the offensive line played great [against Smith County], and Ish did a great job getting him the

ball."

Young has thrown for 688 yards and 13 touchdowns on the year, including 276 yards last week.

The Falcons will look to capture another title despite starting the season 2-2.

"We had to stick together as a team," Young said. "You come together and see what happens."

The Bobcats, who defeated Kingsbury by the score of 14-12 last week, will look to cap off a one-loss regular season with a state championship.

"It was a hard-fought game," Greenbrier head coach Kirk Williams told *The Tennessean*. "They played a great game and our kids played a great game."

The Bobcats have used a talented rushing attack all year, led by Roger Herndon.

Herndon, Class 3A's Mr. Football back of the year, has rushed for more than 2,192 yards and 32 touchdowns this season.

Herndon scored one of the team's two touchdowns last week.

Justin Pigg, who combined with Herndon for almost 150 yards on the ground, scored the other.

The team has played in several close games throughout the playoffs, including last week's win and a 14-7 win against Jackson South Side the week before.

The team's only loss this season came at White House in September.

"We've got one week left," Herndon told the *Tennessean* after the game. "It's a great feeling. There is no way to describe it."

Kickoff for Saturday's game is set for noon. ♦

# Bucs seek second straight 1A title

**By Jon Leffew**  
Asst. Sports Editor

This Friday, the Class 1A Football State Championship will have a familiar look to it.

The Boyd Buchanan Buccaneers and the Donelson Christian Academy Wildcats will square off for the second straight season, and both teams will be looking to cap off excellent seasons with a state championship.

Boyd Buchanan comes into the match up with a 13-1 record, having outscored opponents by an average of more than 30 points per game in the playoffs.

Matt Peardon, a senior running back/linebacker, leads the Buccaneer offense in rushing.

Peardon, who was named the Class 1A Mr. Football back of the year, was named the Offensive MVP of last year's championship game after rushing for 160 yards.

He rushed for three touchdowns and 245 yards in the team's 38-13 blowout of Coalfield last week, and will look to cap off his career

with a second straight championship.

"We are going to play a great team in DCA," Boyd Buchanan head coach Robert Akins told the *Chattanooga*, a daily news Web site. "But that's what this is all about."

DCA also boasts a Mr. Football winner in lineman Mark Thompson.

Thompson, a 6-foot, 5-inch, 290 pound senior with offers from the University of Tennessee, Vanderbilt and Middle Tennessee, is a team captain who has been instrumental in the team's undefeated season.

After allowing only 40 points throughout the entire 2004 playoffs, the Wildcats will look to shut down a Buc offense that won last year's title by the score of 26-3.

In 2A action, the Huntingdon Mustangs will take on the Alcoa Tornadoes.

The Mustangs will look to capture their second straight state championship after destroying David Lipscomb last year.

The Mustangs are led by Philip Weathers, who took home the Mr. Football for Class 2A running back of the year.

Weathers, along with sophomore Chris Donald, rushed for more than 200 yards in the team's 12-7 victory over Milan last week.

The Mustangs will look to stop Alcoa, who defeated David Lipscomb last week.

"We stopped an outstanding offense and we were able to move the ball against a great defense," Alcoa head coach John Reid told the *Knoxville News Sentinel*.

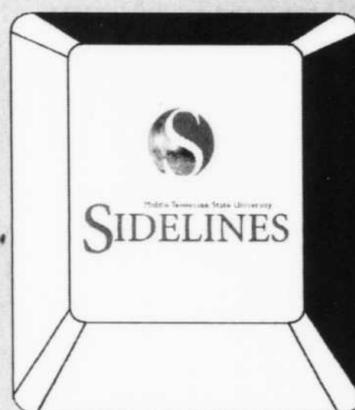
Lineman Brandon Warren, another Mr. Football winner, and running back Dustin Lindsey, both juniors, lead the Tornadoes.

Lindsey, though snubbed in the selection of Mr. Football candidates, rushed for more than 1,300 yards this season and averaged almost nine yards per carry.

Warren recorded 10 tackles for loss and eight sacks this year, and forms another offensive threat for junior quarterback Joei Fiegler.

The Tornadoes, whose only loss came at the hands of Class 4A championship contender Maryville, will look to continue their dominance in the playoffs, where they have allowed only 44 points in four games. ♦

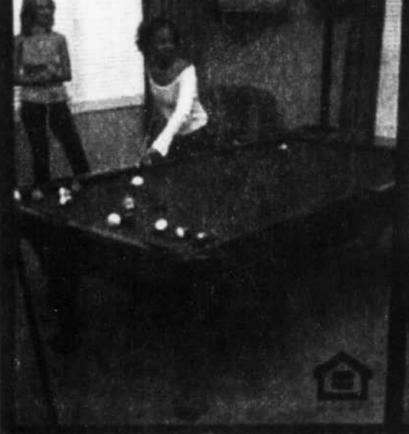
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# Maryville back in finals after one-year absence

By Cody Gibson  
Staff Writer

Maryville and Memphis Melrose will travel from opposite ends of the state to battle for the Class 4A title Friday night.

The teams have already been honored this week, as the two Tennessee Class 4A Mr. Football trophies rest at each team's respective trophy case.

Gregory Hardy of Melrose took home the hardware for lineman of the year, and Maryville's Cade Thompson won the back of the year.

Each program has an unblemished 14-0 record, but their histories are distinctly different. This will be Maryville's fifth trip to the title game since 1998, whereas this will be Melrose's first trip since they won the Class 3A title in 1998.

Melrose's road to the state title game started with a hard-fought victory against Dyersburg, 13-7. The following week Melrose got another scare against Jackson Central-Merry in a 14-12 win.

The quarterfinal matchup pitted Melrose against region foe Ridgewood, whom they hand-

ily defeated 35-0. Last week Melrose held off White House 20-14 to lock up their title game berth.

The players credited their coach Kenny Ingram for leading them to victory.

"We're really happy for coach Ingram," Mr. Football finalist Graig Cooper told *The Memphis Commercial Appeal*. "He was the whole point in us winning."

"We've still got work left to do, but if God is for you, who can stand against you?" said Ingram, who is an ordained minister, following the team's win over White House.

Maryville faced an equally tough path to the BlueCross Bowl. The Rebels had an easy time with its first-round opponent, shutting out Rhea County 34-0.

Maryville then faced region opponent Powell in the second round. After getting out to a 21-0 lead going into halftime, Maryville held off a late Powell charge to win 21-16.

The following week Maryville faced another region rival, Knoxville Central. Trailing by four in the fourth quarter, Maryville scored with 54 sec-

onds remaining to take a 28-24 lead.

Then, on the ensuing drive the Rebels intercepted a Central pass and won 35-24. Maryville then hosted Tennessee High last week and easily dispatched them, 49-0.

Maryville head coach George Quarles spoke strategy and simplicity after his team's most recent victory.

"We saw on film they [Tennessee High] had given up some flat coverage," Quarles told *The Maryville Daily Times*. "The good thing about playing somebody new is we can go back to our base stuff."

The key matchup Saturday will be Maryville's spread offense, which has scored 585 points this season, against a stingy Melrose defense that has surrendered just 55 points in 14 games.

"We just watch a whole lot of film as a defense and be as prepared as we can," Melrose linebacker and Mr. Football 4A Lineman of the Year Gregory Hardy told the *Daily Times*. "If we've got a study hall or something at school, we'll go watch film." ♦

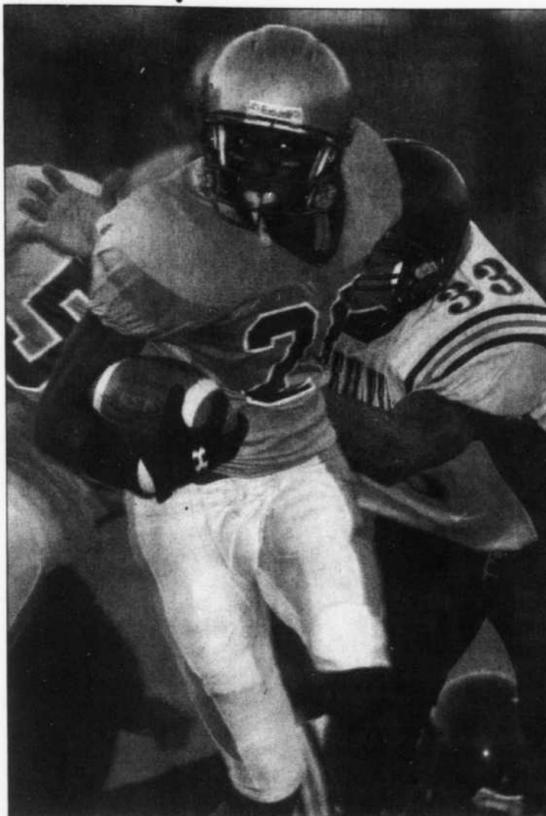


Photo by Nikki Boertman | *The Memphis Commercial Appeal*  
Melrose's Graig Cooper was a Mr. Football 4A finalist.

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Room for rent, plenty of storage, dishwasher, washer/dryer. All utilities included plus cable. Very close to MTSU. \$100 deposit, \$300 monthly. Contact 615-904-2035, leave message.

### Automotive

'98 Blazer For Sale 4x4, 4Dr Excellent Condition. Need to Sell! Call 931-592-2494.

4, ZR18 Yokohama Parada Tires with 18" Niche Road Wheels. \$1500 oboe. Call Mike @ 533-0273.

### Roommates

I am looking for a female roommate who is responsible and doesn't party much (at least at home). I have a really pretty house in a nice subdivision about 2 miles from MTSU. Please call ASAP to see the house. Thanks! 615-653-8003.

Male roommate needed to share house w/3 guys. \$250/mo. + 1/4 utilities. Biking/walking distance from MTSU. No deposit. 817-913-4898.

Nonsmoking female roommate needed to live with 2 outgoing females! Rent is 216 & 1/3 utilities. 3 Bd Brick house CLOSE TO CAMPUS!! For info call Samantha at 931-581-6064.

I am a graduate student who is looking for a non-smoker, responsible and clean roommate to share 1300 sq ft. apartment only blocks from campus. Renter

would have own private bath and walk-in closet. Rent is \$305 plus half utilities (phone, cable, electric, water). Deposit required. Please call 615-904-7246 or 931-334-0985 for more information.

21-yr-old female seeking roommate to share 2bd/ba at Oak Park Apts. \$279/month + \$150 deposit. Washer and dryer included. Possible first and last month's rent upon move-in. No preference regarding sexual orientation. Please call 615-631-8479 ASAP!

Female sub-leaser wanted for one bedroom in a two bedroom two bath apt @ Univ. Courtyard. Located on 1st floor 2/no noisy neighbors above or around. This apartment usually rents for \$525 but get in NOW for \$495 w/a \$99 dep. Move in ASAP, lease will end in July. Contact me Me ASAP at 615907-0794 or [Hnp2b@mtsu.edu](mailto:Hnp2b@mtsu.edu)

Female roommate needed ASAP. 3 BR/2BA house Stonegate subdivision. \$325 plus 1/3 utilities; 5 minutes from campus. Brand new house, 2 car garage, high speed internet, W/D included. Call 731-693-9595 or 615-585-4802.

Male, non-smoker roommate wanted to share 3 bd/2ba with female. 20 minutes from campus. Must sign 6 months or 1 year lease. \$350 plus 1/2 utilities. \$100 deposit required. Call Lisa 615-415-9302-leave msg.

### Subleaser

University Courtyard 4 BD/4BA free sublease! Move in Jan. 2005. Male transferring student! Must sublease! \$395 a month. 615-351-0448.

Subleaser needed to share 3 BR apt. November rent paid. Will only have to pay from December - August 2005. Rent is \$439/mo. includes all utilities and the apartment is fully furnished. if interested please email [becmarsh@bellsouth.net](mailto:becmarsh@bellsouth.net) or phone 423-842-6452 collect.

Subleaser Needed for apt. in University Courtyard. It has 4 BD and 4 BA and only one current resident. Please call 901-508-4606.

Sterling University Gables. Female subleaser needed for spring/summer semester. \$335/mo. Utilities included w/ internet. Awesome roommates, just moving to Fla. Lease starting in Jan. Call Maggie at 770-778-1498 cell

Female subleaser needed. University Courtyard 1st floor, fully furnished 4BD/4BA \$395/mo utilities included and internet access. 1st Month Free-Move in Now! Call Katie at 770-778-1497 or 770-459-7435.

2BD/2BA apt. @ Raiders Crossing. Lease is from Jan1-Aug 13. Completely furnished to include full-size washer/dryer, fridge, microwave, dishwasher, & stove. Also included: high-speed internet, private balcony, pool & hot tub, volleyball court, BBQ grills, fitness center, tanning bed, and computer lab. All inclusive rent \$485/person pays for water, sewer,

trash, pest control, internet, modern furniture, electricity, premium cable, and intrusion alarm. Awesome deal. Call 615-504-5963 or 615-542-2820.

Campus Crossings 2BD. Rent \$505/mo. All girl apt. 1 Rm. vacant during spring semester. All utilities included. Call Shea at 615-218-1888. Lease until July, stating Jan. 1st!!

Need female roommate to sublease 4 bedroom house starting after school commences in Dec. Rent is \$240/mo including all utilities, cable and internet! Right directly across from Murphy Center. Can walk to class. Please call 516-457-0904.

Subleaser needed immediately to share 4BD Apt. at University Courtyard with three males. Rent from Dec.-Aug. 2005. Rent is \$365/mo. Includes all utilities, fully furnished, hot tub, pool, fitness room, free tanning, high speed internet in room, cable and HBO. Call or e-mail adam at [Talouguy17@aol.com](mailto:Talouguy17@aol.com) or 615-319-7054.

### For Rent

Apartment for rent at the Woods. Free utilities, cable and high speed internet. Free month of December. \$389/mo. Call 615-633-8691.

New 3 BR, 2BA House, CH/A, stove, refrig, D/W, washer/dryer., screened back porch, 1 mile from campus. \$975/mo. \$500 deposit, 1 yr. lease, no pets. 895-0075, 417-4009.

Got friends? Looking for an apartment? 4 BR/2 BA, remodeled apartment; very close to campus; \$295 per month / per bedroom. 615-758-9298.

### Lost and Found

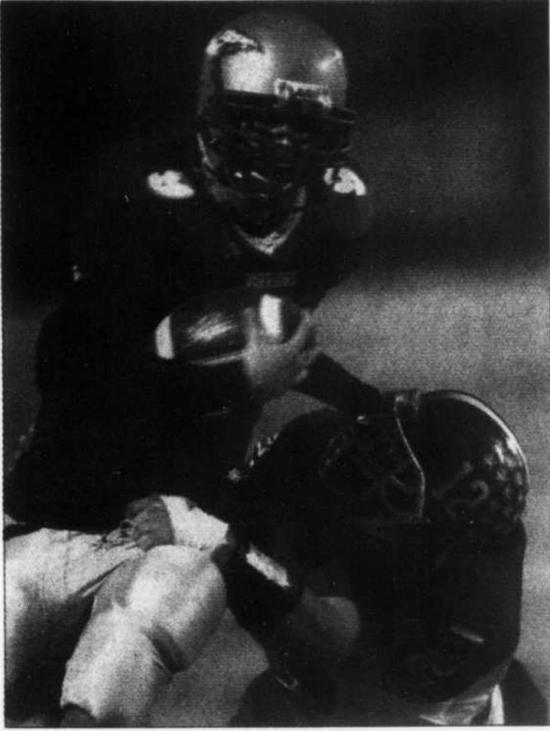
\$Reward\$ - Guitar equipment stolen from truck on 10/30. Includes Vox wah, Sabine turner, Samson Wireless system, channel switcher, cables. All in black box. Murray 496-7053.

### Pets

Beautiful white kitten with bright blue eyes needs a loving home. He is neutered and will give paperwork. Please call 516-457-0904.

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# Riverdale makes fifth trip to Floyd

By Colby Sledge  
Sports Editor

Two teams that took very different roads to the BlueCross Bowl will meet in the Class 5A championship game Saturday night.

Riverdale has enjoyed a 14-0 season that has presented few challenges. The Warriors have outscored their opponents 631-91 and are ranked No. 21 in the USA Today Super 25 national prep rankings.

Riverdale quarterback Dave Thomas became the school's seventh Mr. Football winner and third in the past four years. Thomas has 2,148 yards in total offense and 29 touchdowns this season.

"It's an honor to get this, and it's a privilege to even be on that list [of former winners]," Thomas told *The Daily News Journal*. "My main goal is to win a state championship. This is good, too, but we have a ball-game Saturday."

Photo by Zac Pagett | *The Daily News Journal*

**Riverdale quarterback Dave Thomas won the Mr. Football 5A Award.**

Riverdale's playoff march began with a 41-0 pasting of Franklin County, followed by a 35-0 shutout over county rival Smyrna. Cookeville broke the Warriors' four-game shutout streak in a 28-7 loss to Riverdale, and the Warriors clinched their fifth straight trip to the state championship game with a 42-28 win over Oak Ridge.

While Riverdale had a fairly easy time during its playoff run, Franklin was only able to breathe easily in last week's 30-10 win over 2003 champion Germantown.

The Rebels won their opening-round game over Antioch 10-7 before defeating Clarksville by the same score in the second round. David Campbell's 55-yard field goal provided the difference in the Rebels' win over the Wildcats.

Franklin High then faced rival Brentwood, who gave the Rebels their only regular season loss. Franklin running back Derrian Waters scored two touchdowns, including a 47-yard run, to avenge their loss 14-7 and move on to the semifinals for the second time in school history.

The Rebels then took care of business against Germantown, helping ease the pain of a 17-10 loss to the Red Devils last year in the semifinals.

Waters again carried the Rebels, as he ran for 162 yards and one score on 21 carries.

"The best thing about Derrian is that he's such a class act," Franklin head coach Tim Johnson told *The Tennessean*. "Why I don't have more colleges beating down my door for him, I don't know. I think a lot of people underestimate what kind of player he is."

Franklin will easily be the underdog in Saturday's matchup, but Riverdale has lost its last two shots at another title. Last year Germantown defeated the Warriors 10-7, and Brentwood won by the same score in 2002.

"We've made it there a few times and didn't come out on top," Riverdale senior Rahmel Oliver told *The Tennessean*. "This time we're going to do it. Coach [Gary Rankin] told us before the game that we've been there before and not come out on top. But we're going to do it this time." ♦

# McNair still discussing retirement

By Teresa M. Walker  
AP Sports Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Tennessee Titans quarterback Steve McNair isn't backing away from comments that he will consider retirement after this season.

McNair said Wednesday his health and spending more time with his children are his top concerns.

"It's frustrating when you've got a 6-year-old boy (who) asks you to go play catch, and you've got to tell him no because you're injured. That's kind of frustrating," McNair said. "That frustrates me mentally because you can't do things as a father that you need to do."

"I want to be able to play catch. I want to be able to go out and do the things with my kids that a normal father would do. I can't do it banged up. That's the biggest consideration right now."

After a 31-21 loss to the Houston Texans in which McNair turned the ball over three times Sunday, the 2003 co-

MVP said he would evaluate his football future immediately. Coach Jeff Fisher talked with his quarterback that night and again Monday and said McNair was frustrated over the loss.

Given a chance to back off, McNair refused on Wednesday.

"It's nothing to do with this football or what position we are in right now. It's all about my health. This year has been one of the worst as far as me not being on the field," he said. "I've been doing that for a long time, and my body right now, it's saying one thing, and my mind is saying another."

McNair aggravated his bruised sternum in last week's loss, an injury that put him in the hospital for two nights in September and kept him out of three games completely. Twice, he was knocked out of games.

That's the most playing time he has missed since 1999, when he sat out five games because of surgery to repair a disc in his lower back.

But the man who played through at least 24 separate injuries and six operations or procedures before this season is used to pain. His misery stems from what he can't do at home.

"Nobody understands but me and probably a couple other people how hard it is for me after a game to get out of my bed or go out and play toss with my little boy," he said. "And that's the frustrating part about it — not being able to do the things I normally would do if I was healthy."

McNair watched practice Wednesday, and Fisher said the quarterback likely won't do anything on Thursday, either.

Titans owner Bud Adams told Houston television station KRIV on Monday that it's important that McNair keep playing. The franchise is 77-48 when McNair starts, but Adams said any decision McNair makes will not be based on money.

"He is a real conservative guy. He's hung on to his money and has a lot of it in the bank. If he wanted to hang 'em up, he

would be fixed for the rest of his life," Adams said.

McNair said his current focus is on preparing to play at Indianapolis (8-3) on Sunday. He said he will try to heal before sitting down with his family in the offseason for a long discussion about his future.

"This isn't the first time I've talked about (retirement)," McNair said. "My body has been through a lot in my 10 years of playing football. Two to three times down the road, I've thought about it, but somehow I've been talked out of it, or I come back feeling good the next week."

Colts coach Tony Dungy got to know McNair a little during the Pro Bowl last February, and he said he selfishly wouldn't mind if McNair retired. But Dungy expects McNair will be back.

"I think it is more in-season frustration," Dungy said. "Hopefully, he will be back and continue to go because the league needs him, and the fans should get a chance to appreciate him." ♦



Visit the events calendar on *Sidelines* online.

| Event Calendar |        |         |           |          |        |   |
|----------------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|---|
| Sunday         | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday  |
|                |        |         |           |          |        | 1 - MTC<br>2 - MTC<br>3 - MTC<br>4 - MTC<br>5 - MTC<br>6 - MTC<br>7 - MTC<br>8 - MTC<br>9 - MTC<br>10 - MTC<br>11 - MTC<br>12 - MTC<br>13 - MTC<br>14 - MTC<br>15 - MTC<br>16 - MTC<br>17 - MTC<br>18 - MTC<br>19 - MTC<br>20 - MTC<br>21 - MTC<br>22 - MTC<br>23 - MTC<br>24 - MTC<br>25 - MTC<br>26 - MTC<br>27 - MTC<br>28 - MTC<br>29 - MTC<br>30 - MTC<br>31 - MTC |

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