

WEEK ONE
MIDDLE TENNESSEE AT VANDERBILT

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- Vanderbilt coach Derek Mason never has to coach against Middle Tennessee quarterback Brent Stockstill, and he couldn't be happier.

Mason also couldn't be more glad to have Kyle Shurmur for the rest of this season.

Shurmur threw for 170 yards and two touchdowns as Vanderbilt routed Middle Tennessee 35-7 Saturday night in the season opener for both teams.

"I've seen both of those guys grow up, and I think they're really good quarterbacks," Mason said. "Tonight wasn't as explosive as probably everyone wanted to see. I think they had a little bit to do with what was happening on the other side of the ball. You've got to give both defenses a little credit."

Dayo Odeyingbo returned a fumble 3 yards for a TD, and the Commodores had six sacks and forced two turnovers in winning their second straight opener at Middle Tennessee's expense. They also wrapped a four-game contract with their fourth straight victory against the Conference USA school less than 40 miles away.

Khari Blasingame also ran for a TD.

With the senior quarterbacks poised to keep adding to school records, this was expected to be a showdown through the air. Vanderbilt stuck to the ground on its opening touchdown drive, and Shurmur had just 28 yards passing in the first half compared to Brent Stockstill who hit 10 of his first 12 passes for 100 yards in the first quarter alone.

Stockstill had only 78 yards passing in the second half while Shurmur finished strong in a game in which the original kickoff was delayed 21 minutes by lightning.

Middle Tennessee coach Rick Stockstill said he's much happier after this opener than a year ago against Vanderbilt, and he knows his Blue Raiders can play better.

"We made too many mistakes and you can't expect to beat a quality SEC team on the road doing that," Stockstill said.

Shurmur put Vanderbilt up 21-7 midway through the third quarter with a 17-yard TD pass to Chris Pierce on his first career reception. Shurmur set up the TD with a perfect 49-yard pass to Donaven Tennyson two plays earlier, and he hit Kalija Lipscomb on a 28-yarder in the fourth quarter for a 28-7 lead.

Vanderbilt led 7-0 in the first quarter when the Commodores lost one of its best defenders and its second safety for the game. Review showed LaDarius Wiley lowered his helmet and popped off Middle Tennessee running back Tavares Thomas' helmet at the end of a run. Wiley was ejected, with Zaire Jones already suspended over an arrest Aug. 23.

The penalty kept Middle Tennessee's drive alive, and Stockstill finished off a 93-yard drive with a 4-yard TD pass to C.J. Windham tying it at 7-7 late in the first quarter.

THE TAKEAWAY

Middle Tennessee: The Blue Raiders showed they could slow down a Southeastern Conference team for at least a half, holding Vanderbilt to 89 yards after giving up 58 on the opening drive. That could help with trips to two more SEC schools this season: No. 3 Georgia on Sept. 15 and then Kentucky on Nov. 17.

Vanderbilt: Coach Derek Mason hired his first defensive coordinator since his first season here, and the addition of Jason Tarver paid off pretty quickly. Odeyingbo picked up a fumble off a Stockstill lateral and scored the Commodores' first TD off a fumble recovery since 2016 against Kentucky. The Commodores also had five sacks by halftime, matching what they got against the Blue Raiders a year ago in their opener.

SLOW START

Shurmur was much better in the third quarter as he was 4 of 5 for 93 yards. He said the finish was proof the Commodores kept their composure after the slow first half. Vandy outscored the Blue Raiders 21-0 after halftime.

"It's a testament to our guys that we stay composed at halftime, didn't panic and went out there and tried to do our job and finally got it going toward the end," Shurmur said.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
MTSU	7	0	0	0	7
VAN	7	7	7	14	35

Scoring Summary -----

	MT	VU
FIRST QUARTER		
TD 12:21		
Khari Blasingame 30 Yd Run (Ryley Guay Kick)		
5 plays, 58 yards, 2:39	0	7
TD 1:59		
CJ Windham 4 Yd pass from Brent Stockstill (Crews Holt Kick)		
15 plays, 93 yards, 6:58	7	7
second Quarter		
TD 14:01		
Dayo Odeyingbo 3 Yd Fumble Return (Ryley Guay Kick)		
1 play, -11 yards, 0:00	7	14
third Quarter		
TD 7:26		
Chris Pierce 17 Yd pass from Kyle Shurmur (Ryley Guay Kick)		
7 plays, 92 yards, 4:25	7	21
fourth Quarter		
TD 12:47		
Kalija Lipscomb 28 Yd pass from Kyle Shurmur (Ryley Guay Kick)		
12 plays, 80 yards, 4:56	7	28
TD 1:28		
Jamauri Wakefield 14 Yd Run (Ryley Guay Kick)		
12 plays, 80 yards, 7:04	7	35

Team Stats	MTSU	VAND
First Downs	21	19
Total Yards	294	346
Total Plays	73	55
Avg Gain Per Play	4.0	6.3
Net Yards Rushing	116	176
Rushes	36	38
Yards Per Rush	3.2	4.6
Net Yards Passing	178	170
Comp-Att	24-37	10-17
Yards Per Pass	4.8	10.0
Times Sacked	1	6
Yds Lost To Sacks	-13	-30
Interceptions	1	0
Punts	4	4
Punt Average	42.8	36.8
Penalties	6	7
Penalty Yards	40	49
Fumbles	2	0
Fumbles Lost	1	0

Individual Stats

RUSHING

MTSU	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
21 Tavares Thomas	8	32	4.0	14	0
28 Maurice Gordon	4	27	6.8	22	0
44 Chaton Mobley	6	24	4.0	10	0
1 Terelle West	3	23	7.7	14	0
12 Brent Stockstill	14	10	0.7	14	0
11 Brad Anderson	1	0	0.0	0	0
Vanderbilt	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
32 Jamauri Wakefield	10	56	5.6	14	1
23 Khari Blasingame	9	52	5.8	30	1
5 Ke'Shawn Vaughn	9	37	4.1	16	0
16 Kalija Lipscomb	2	19	9.5	14	0
7 Cam Johnson	1	6	6.0	6	0
6 Josh Crawford	2	5	2.5	5	0
14 Kyle Shurmur	4	2	0.5	7	0

PASSING

MT	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
12 Brent Stockstill	24	36	178	4.9	1	1	111.8
3 Luke Shiflett	0	0	0	-	0	0	-
Vanderbilt	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
14 Kyle Shurmur	10	17	170	10.0	2	0	181.6

RECEIVING

xxx	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
21 Tavares Thomas	4	42	10.5	16	0
11 Brad Anderson	5	37	7.4	12	0
86 Tavonn Salter	1	28	28.0	28	0
8 Ty Lee	5	25	5.0	7	0
81 CJ Windham	2	19	9.5	15	1
44 Chaton Mobley	3	13	4.3	8	0
27 Ruben Garnett	1	7	7.0	7	0
1 Terelle West	1	6	6.0	6	0
3 Luke Shiflett	1	4	4.0	4	0
37 Patrick Smith	1	-3	-3.0	0	0
Vanderbilt	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
16 Kalija Lipscomb	4	60	15.0	28	1
4 Donaven Tennyson	1	49	49.0	49	0
80 Jared Pinkney	3	32	10.7	15	0
19 Chris Pierce	1	17	17.0	17	1
5 Ke'Shawn Vaughn	1	12	12.0	12	0
7 Cam Johnson	0	0	-	-	0