Kirby's 26 Points Leads Clipping of Eagles

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Sophomore Eboni Kirby had a big day as she scored 26 points to help lead Middle Tennessee women's basketball past Carson Newman College 83-61 Sunday in Murphy Center.

In the final exhibition of the season, the Lady Raiders started slow in the first half, only shooting 40 percent and finding themselves only up by four 37-33. The Lady Raiders shot 75 percent in the second half and pulled away from the Lady Eagles.

A lot of Middle Tennessee's points came from the strong inside play of Kirby, who went 11-for13 from the field, 1-for-1 from the three point line and 3-for-3 from the charity stripe. Perimeter play by the Lady Raiders was also the key, as senior guard Paula Penttila was 4-for-7 from three-point land.

Overall five Lady Raiders score in double figures, as Jennifer Justice had 16, Penttila added 14, Mia Parviaine had 10 and Patrice Holmes added 15 as well as 13 assists. All but one Lady Raider, who had minutes in the game, scored for Middle Tennessee with Jessica Schlueter adding two points to the tally.

Game Notes and Quotes:

It's Raining Threes: Middle Tennessee had nine three pointers in the game, with six coming in the first half. Of the seven Lady Raiders who played, all but two had one or more three-point baskets in the game. Penttila led the team with four.

Kirby Makes Most of Start: After seeing limiting playing time last season, Eboni Kirby made the most of her starting nod. It was her second double figure scoring effort of the exhibition season as she scored 10 points against Georgia College and State University and 26 against Carson Newman College.

Now It Counts: The Lady Raiders will have the week to prepare for their opening game on November 25 when the team travels to Cookeville, TN to take on Tennessee Tech. Last season Tennessee Tech defeated Middle Tennessee 68-64.

MT Head Coach Stephany Smith: "Ciara [Gray] got released at halftime. It was a partial release. She is able to practice sporadically and make sure there is no swelling or soreness."

"Mia Parvianien, who is a guard by nature, is playing a post for us this year. She has had one opportunity to play in the post, and that was the last exhibition game. She really wanted to have the opportunity to play post again this afternoon, she didn't get to."
"Anytime someone plays you in a zone, you are going to have wide open shots. In the first half, that was the shot we looked for. We took the first wide open shot, which I also thought was a problem in the first exhibition game. We had poor shot selection because we took the first shot the defense gave us, which was not necessarily the best shot to take."

MT Center Eboni Kirby: "Coach Smith put an emphasis on us to bang it inside first before taking the three point shot. That is basically what we were trying to do. We took it inside to see if we could score there, and if not, then take it outside and see what we could do with that."

"Today was a pretty good confidence builder. There were a lot of things that we could have been better at. There is a lot of room for improvement and we will be focusing on that in practice."

MT Guard Patrice Holmes: "When Coach Smith recruited me, she knew that I could play point guard. It is really good for me because I am able to get my teammates the ball."

"We weren't closing out the shooters, and we let them take it to the rim anytime they wanted to. We are going to practice hard this next week, and get better on defense."

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