Purdue Beats MT 85-56

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WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. - Middle Tennessee ran into a Boilermaker buzzsaw on Friday night, dropping its opening round game of the Purdue Boilermaker Invitational 85-56.

The Blue Raiders (1-5) came out tough early in the first half. A Marcus Robinson trey put the Blue Raiders up 11-7 with 14:34 to go in the first frame.

Boilermaker Kenneth Lowe then put his team on his shoulders. Lowe, who had already hit a three-pointer, drilled two free throws to cut the lead to two. Lowe then connected on a jumper to knot the score at 11 with 14:06 to go in the first frame. Lowe's performance sparked Purdue on a 9-2 run that kept his team within a point of the Blue Raiders until the 5:37 mark of the opening frame.

From that point, Purdue (3-1) took command of the game. A Lowe layup put the Boilermakers up 25-22 and Purdue didn't trail again. In fact, Purdue closed out the half with a 15-7 run that sent the home team into the locker room with a 40-29 advantage.

Blue Raider Head Coach Kermit Davis said, "We held them to 37 percent in the first half and we were outrebounding them, or maybe one down, at the half but the difference was 18-3 at the free throw line. I thought the halftime score shouldn't have been that much of a differential. I thought we were right there in it. When you play a Big Ten team on the road, you have to learn to fight through those kinds of things."

The Boilermakers came out just as hot to start the second half. Lowe and Willie Deane netted a shot each in the opening seconds of the final stanza, forcing the Blue Raiders to take a timeout trailing 44-29. Tommy Gunn ended the Purdue run with a three-pointer with 18:37 left, cutting the lead to 44-32. The 12-point deficit would prove to be as close as the Blue Raiders would come for the remainder of the game.

There were a few positives for the Blue Raiders in the game. The team outrebounded the Boilermakers 38-35, giving Middle Tennessee the advantage on the boards for the fourth time in six

games. The team also turned in its second-best performance of the year from behind the 3-point arc with a 7-of-17 effort for 41.2 percent.

Derek Glasper also made his season debut in the game against Purdue. Glasper missed all but two games last season due to a knee injury and had not played this year after spraining an ankle just prior to the beginning of the season. Glasper finished the game with five points in 14 minutes of playing time.

Davis found Glasper's appearance in the game a positive for his team.

"I was pleased to see Derek Glasper get some minutes," Davis said. "We just tried to play him a bunch and he got really, really tired, but we wanted to get him some time late in the game. Maybe he can be a guy that can come in and help us a little bit."

William Pippen led the Blue Raiders in scoring in the game with 10 points. It marked the fourth straight time that the Hamburg, Ark., product has posted 10 or more points and the second straight game that he has led the team in the scoring column. Steven Jackson and Eric Parham pulled down six rebounds each to pace the Blue Raiders in that category.

Three Boilermakers tallied double figures in scoring with Lowe leading all scorers with 16 points.

The Blue Raiders will play in the consolation game tomorrow afternoon against a familiar opponent. IUPUI fell to San Diego in the tournament's opening game on Friday evening and will meet the Blue Raiders at 4:30 PM on Saturday afternoon.

The meeting will be the third ever between the teams, with both teams owning one win in the series. The Jaguars knocked off the Blue Raiders in Indianapolis two seasons ago, but Middle Tennessee returned the favor in the Murphy Center last season with a 76-72 win. Purdue will take on San Diego in the tournament finale following the first contest.

Middle Tennessee's game will be broadcast locally on WMOT 89.5 FM and WBOZ 104.9 FM with Dick Palmer handling the play-by-play duties.

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