

Kirby Scores 20 in Lady Raider Win

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Sophomore Eboni Kirby scored a career-high 20 points to help lead Middle Tennessee (6-4) to an 83-62 win over Tennessee State (2-7) Saturday in Murphy Center.

After trailing for most of the first half, Middle Tennessee entered the locker room with a 31-27 advantage. The Lady Raiders shot 63 percent in the second half and outscored the Lady Tigers 52-35 in the second half to pull away and take the win.

Kirby was near perfection from the field shooting 9-of-10 and also snagged six rebounds. She led three other Lady Raiders in double figure scoring as Patrice Holmes and Tia Stovall each added 14 and Paula Penttila had 12.

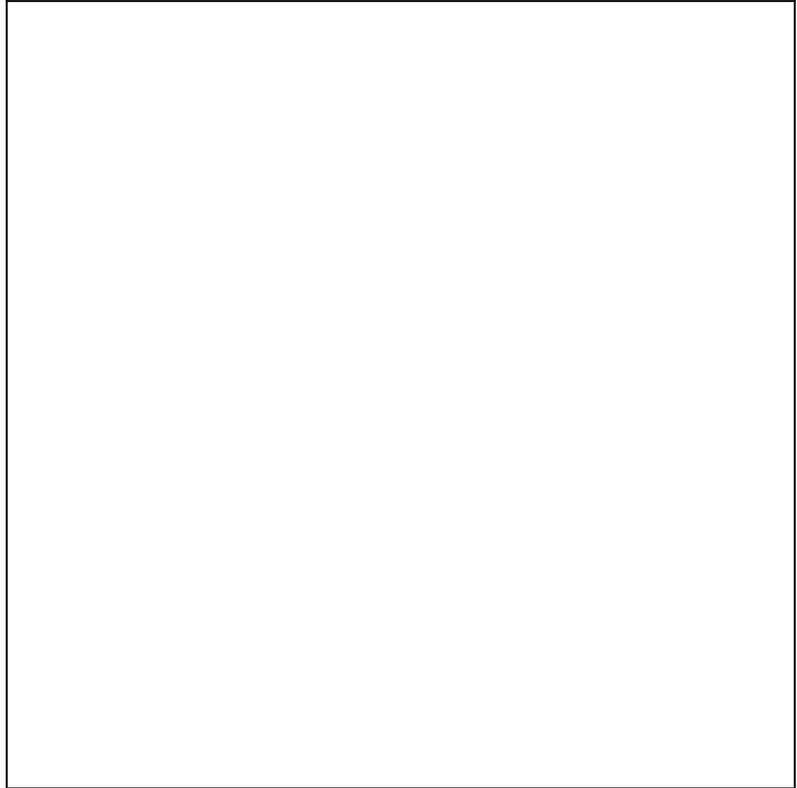
Middle Tennessee will continue its home swing with the Lady Raiders host the University of Georgia on Monday December 30. Tip-off is set for 7 p.m. in the Murphy Center.

STREAKS CONTINUE: The Lady Raiders have now won eight straight games in the Murphy Center including four in a row this year. Also, the team has now been victorious in five straight games over Tennessee State.

KIRBY RESPONDS: Eboni Kirby responded to her first appearance in the starting lineup in three games with her first career 20-point effort. Kirby ended the game with 20 points on 9-of-10 shooting. Kirby's performance is the fifth 20-point game for the Lady Raiders this season with Patrice Holmes and Tia Stovall having accomplished the feat twice each.

70+ POINTS = WIN: The Lady Raiders have now scored 70 or more points on five occasions this season and have been victorious in each. In contrast, the Lady Raiders are 1-4 when scoring less than 70 points this season.

GETTING IT DONE INSIDE: The Lady Raiders did most of their damage in the paint against



Tennessee State. MT posted 64 of their 83 points in the interior, while Tennessee State scored only 24 inside. The Lady Raiders also dominated the glass, outrebounding the Lady Tigers 46-32.

UP NEXT: The Lady Raiders will face SEC foe Georgia in the Murphy Center on Monday, Dec. 30 at 7 PM. The team will then begin the Sun Belt portion of the schedule with a Jan. 4 game at home against Western Kentucky in the only Lady Raider-Blue Raider double header of the season.

FAST BREAKS: Forward Eboni Kirby was back in the starting five today after a two-game absence ... Lady Raider Head Coach Stephany Smith is now only seven wins shy of 100 for her career ... Forward Tia Stovall has now reached the double figure scoring plateau in three straight games ... Guard Patrice Holmes has now scored 10 or more points in 11 consecutive games dating back to last season ... Guard Paula Penttila reached double figures in scoring for the second time this season.

QUOTES

Head Coach Stephany Smith: "In the first half, part of the reason for our haphazard play was due to foul trouble. I was very pleased with the way we came out in the second half."

Smith on Eboni Kirby: "When she's aware of where I want her to be and what I want her to do, she's going to be able to put some points on the board."

Guard Patrice Holmes: "My teammates held it down for me in the first half. I think Eboni Kirby and Keisha McCLinic did a good job holding it together in the first half. We did a better job of taking care of the ball and pushing the ball in the second half."

Forward Eboni Kirby: "We talk a lot in practice about having people step up in games and tonight was my night. My teammates did a good job trying to get the ball inside on hard cuts."

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