Lady Raiders Down UALR 68-29

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee (9-6, 3-0 SBC) closed out its eight game home stand with a 68-29 win over Sun Belt Conference opponent Arkansas-Little Rock (3-10, 0-3 SBC) on Saturday in Murphy Center.

The Lady Raiders scored 31 points off 27 Arkansas-Little Rock turnovers. The 29 points scored by Arkansas-Little Rock ties the Lady Trojan's school record for lowest offensive output. It is the third lowest opponent score total a Middle Tennessee team has allowed in school history.

With the score tied 6-6 with 15:49 left to play in the first half, Middle Tennessee went on a 14-0 run to pull away for Arkansas-Little Rock and the team never looked back. The Lady Raiders shot 50 percent from the field as opposed to Arkansas-Little Rock's frosty 23.9 percent. The Lady Raiders also got 34 points in the paint and recorded 26 points off the bench.

Sophomore Patrice Holmes led all scorers for the third straight game with 15 points, and Jennifer Justice and Eboni Kirby also scored in double figures with 10 a piece. Red shirt sophomore Cartia Bailey logged in a career-high 20 minutes and also scored her career-high of seven points in the first eight minutes of the game.

Middle Tennessee returns to the road on Thursday when the Lady Raiders travel to Mobile, Alabama

to take on South Alabama. Tip-off is set for 7 p.m.

POSTGAME NOTES
MIDDLE TENNESSEE VS ARKANSAS-LITTLE ROCK

3-0: The Lady Raiders ran their conference record in the Sun Belt to a perfect 3-0 with today's win over UALR. It marks the first time in the history of the SBC the Lady Raiders have opened with three straight wins and the first time MT has gone 3-0 to begin league play since 1995-96 when the Lady Raiders started 8-0 in the OVC.

DEFENSE STEPS UP: The Lady Raiders turned in an incredible defensive effort in the win over UALR. Middle Tennessee held UALR to 23.9 percent shooting, forced 27 turnovers, and allowed just 29 total points. It equaled the fewest points ever scored by an Arkansas-Little Rock team in their school's history and the fewest allowed by a Middle Tennessee team since defeating Vanderbilt 91-26 on Dec. 1, 1976.

SOLID EFFORT: Sophomore Jennifer Justice turned in a solid all-around game in the win over UALR with 10 points, seven rebounds, four assists and three steals in 30 minutes. Justice has now hit double figures in three of the last four games.

THIS 'N' THAT: The Lady Raiders have now won six straight home Sun Belt Conference games ... Over their past two games, the Lady Raiders have forced an average of 26.5 turnovers ... In the games first eight minutes, reserve Cartia Bailey scored a career-best seven points, while connecting on her first career three-pointer ... The Blue Raiders dominated in the paint today by outscoring UALR 34-10 ... MT's bench outscored UALR's 26-5 ... Patrice Holmes has now scored in double figures 32 times in her two-year career, including 14 times in 15 chances this season ... The Lady Raiders' 39-point victory was their largest margin of victory since defeating Morris Brown 90-39 last year ... Middle Tennessee had 17 steals, which ranks as its most since collecting 18 in a win over ETSU earlier this year ... The Lady Raiders went without a blocked shot today for only the second time this year.

QUOTES:

MT Head Coach Stephany Smith: "I thought we played pretty well defensively. There are still some things we are working on. On our double teams, we are not very aggressive. I think at times our double teams are aggressive, but our rotations are not aggressive. I wanted to run almost to a fault tonight to get some edit to teach from so we can look at ourselves and try to fix what ought to be one of our strengths, but has been one of our weaknesses. Hopefully, it is something we will fix and continue to get some transition buckets out of it."

"I was disappointed we only had 29 points at the half. We had gotten good wide-open looks, but we just didn't make any shots. It just makes a world of difference when you knock shots down. In the second half, we knocked down a lot of shots. I think seven three pointers on the night could very well be the most we made all year."

MT Forward Jennifer Justice: "Obviously, they couldn't make any shots and I guess our defense was a big part of that. We had to box out because they had a lot bigger post players than we did.

Our defense was a lot better than the last game."

MT Guard Cartia Bailey: "I feel like that is my job, being the spark plug and the energy leader of the team. Either playing or on the bench, I am the team cheerleader."

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