

November 13, 2006

Jackrabbits Sink Blue Raiders, 72-61

Raiders shoot just 31 percent from the field in loss

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Megan Vogel tallied 23 points and seven rebounds and South Dakota State shot 56 percent for the game compared to just 31 percent for Middle Tennessee, as the visiting Jackrabbits won their second straight contest at Murphy Center, 72-61, Monday night.

SDSU won its only other meeting against the Blue Raiders in Murfreesboro, 58-56, two seasons ago, but Middle Tennessee returned the favor last year with a 79-72 triumph in Brookings, S.D.

Vogel and point guard Andrea Verdegan handled the Middle Tennessee press for most of the night, though SDSU did have 24 turnovers in the game. But the visitors were 9-of-12 in the second half from the field and 8-for-14 from behind the 3-point line for the game. The Jackrabbits also hit 22-of-27 from the foul line in the second half, as both teams were in the bonus with more than 10 minutes to play.

Verdegan ended the contest with 11 points, seven rebounds and five assists, while Stacie Oistad came off the bench to score 10 points.

Middle Tennessee just could not find the basket throughout the game, going 20-for-65 from the floor as a team. Senior **Chrissy Givens** tallied 17 points and **Amber Holt** ended with 19, but the duo combined to go 12-for-41 from the field.

Freshman **Chelsia Lymon** contributed 10 points off the bench, her second straight double-digit output. Holt added a game-high 10 rebounds.

The Blue Raiders (0-2) hit the road for the Subway Basketball Classic this weekend in Minneapolis, Minn., taking on the Maine Blackbears Saturday at 1 p.m. CT.

POSTGAME NOTES

DOUBLE-DOUBLE: For the first time in her young Blue Raider career, junior **Amber Holt** recorded her first double-double when she notched 19 points and 10 rebounds in a loss to South Dakota State. After two games, Holt is averaging 23.5 points and 9.0 rebounds.

GIVENS TIES ROBINSON: With three steals against South Dakota State, senior **Chrissy Givens** moved into a tie for ninth place on the all-time list with Priscilla Robinson. Givens, who also had three thefts against Maryland, has 194 career steals and needs just five more to tie Kelly Chastain for eighth place.

SHOOTING WOES DOOM BLUE RAIDERS: Middle Tennessee's surprising loss to South Dakota State can be traced back to poor shooting. The Blue Raiders shot a dismal 30.8



Senior Chrissy Givens scored 17 points and had six rebounds, three assists and three steals, but the Blue Raiders shot just 31 percent from the field in Monday's 72-61 loss to South Dakota State. (Joe Robbins)

percent from the field (20-for-65), including just 29.4 percent in the second half. It went down as the worst shooting performance under Head Coach Rick Insell and the worst by the Blue Raiders since hitting just 28.1 percent (18-for-64) against Georgia on Dec. 30, 2002 - a span of 86 games. The 30.8 percent was also the worst shooting effort at the Murphy Center since making just 29.0 percent of its shots against Kansas State on Dec. 17, 2001.

LYMON'S BEEN STEADY: One of the lone bright spots for Middle Tennessee in the loss to South Dakota State was the play of freshman **Chelsia Lymon**. The Georgetown, Ky., native came off the bench to connect on 3 of 5 shots (all three-pointers) to score 10 points to go along with three assists in a season-high 20 minutes of action. In two games this year, Lymon has made 8 of 12 shots, including 5 of 8 from behind the arc.

STRONG AT THE LINE: After the first two games, Middle Tennessee has done an excellent job at the charity stripe. The Blue Raiders are shooting an impressive 86.2 percent (25-for-29), including 87.5 percent in the second half. **Amber Holt** leads the way with a percentage of 87.5 (14-for-16).

QUICK HITTERS: The Blue Raiders have forced 47 turnovers in their first two games, while committing just 22 ... **Chrissy Givens** has played all 80 minutes this season ... Only one player shot better than 45 percent from the field for the Blue Raiders against the Jackrabbits (Lymon) ... The Blue Raiders have owned the offensive glass the first two games combined by a 32 to 16 count ... The Blue Raiders received 12 votes in the Associated Press poll released earlier on Monday.

POSTGAME QUOTES

Middle Tennessee Head Coach Rick Insell

Opening Comments

"Our kids played hard. I can't fault their effort. [South Dakota State] was too good of outside shooters for us to stay in a zone. We knew if they were able to catch the ball on the outside of the key and turn their offense, we would have trouble defending. We came in and shot 30 percent. You can't win a game if you shoot 30 percent and get out rebounded. We know what our weaknesses are and we have to get better at them. I'm disappointed tonight like I was when we lost the other night [to Maryland]. We've got some good players and it's going to be a long season."

On South Dakota State's execution during the last five minutes of the second half

"They did a tremendous job onight. This was their first game and they came out and stuck us. They executed their offensive and shot 55 percent from the floor. The shots they were getting had a lot to do with our poor job getting to the offensive and defensive boards."

On the excitement leading up to this game after playing well against defending national champion Maryland

"The season is a marathon. We need to work hard in practice. Games like this will make us better. South Dakota State is not a bad basketball team. They beat us here two years ago and we were able to pull out a win last year on their court. They came right back and beat us this year. [Megan] Vogel is about as good of a player as we will play this year. Their point guard [Andrea Verdegan] was also very good."

Middle Tennessee Freshman Guard Chelsia Lymon

On South Dakota State's defense and the problems it caused for Middle Tennessee

"They did a lot of over-playing and they got into us. They made us work for every pass. They did a really good job of getting up close and making us work for our shots and made it hard to feed the post."

On the physical play of South Dakota State

"They came ready to play. They were physical and when you play at the top level, you are not going to get some of the pitty-pat calls. They made us work for everything."

On what the team got out of the game

"We have got to go to work. The team is struggling on defense and rebounding. Once we get our rebounding down and denying the wings, we will be alright. It's early and later on this season, I think everything will start working out."

**South Dakota State Head Coach Aaron Johnston
on the win against Middle Tennessee**

"They played a really good game against Maryland a few nights ago, so we knew that they were going to challenge us. They forced a lot of turnovers. They used all the intensity on the defensive side so we wouldn't have chances to take good shots. The shots were all wide open. I thought we moved the ball well enough and executed well enough to get good shots. In the second half we didn't hustle as much as I would have liked, but we were a little bit more aggressive."

on Middle Tennessee's aggressiveness

"There was no pressure for us to win this game. We tried a basic offense. We kept it simple and told the kids about being strong and trying to drive. We talked about trying to pick up some fouls in the second half. If they are going to put that much pressure on us, we have to turn that pressure on them and get to the free throw line. I thought Andrea (Verdegan) had a much better second half. In the first half she turned it over and was really timid. In the second half she handled it much better and forced them to get out of the half court press."

Senior Forward Megan Vogel**on Middle Tennessee's defensive pressure**

"Middle Tennessee is a great team. They are really athletic and they have good post and perimeter players. Their defense was all up in our grill all night. That's one thing we prepared for with our practice guys. Give credit to them, all night they played hard and right down to the wire. Every possession was mentally draining because you knew every time you caught the ball, you weren't going to be able to look and see your teammates. We had to look to score. They are a very good team and they are going to do very well this season."

on adjustments made during halftime

"We were too tentative in the first half. We knew their press was really good. A lot of it was just [walking] because we were catching and dribbling and didn't know what we wanted to do. In the second half we made some adjustments and decided to go after them. They actually pulled their press off a little bit, which allowed us to run some offense. You have to go after those people and we did. If they are going to pressure us, we are going to attack them and make them pay for it."

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