Blue Raiders Make it Three in a Row with 98-69 Triumph

Givens, Holt, Pickel all net double figures to lead the way

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Chrissy Givens netted 29 points, Amber Holt scored 26 with 10 rebounds and freshman Jackie Pickel nailed five 3-pointers, leading Middle Tennessee to a 98-69 victory over Chattanooga Friday night at Murphy Center. The Blue Raiders (3-2) exacted a little revenge on the Lady Mocs after last season's 76-66 UTC victory in the season opener for both teams. Middle Tennessee got off to a slow start, turning the ball over the first two times down the floor but came back to shoot 58 percent in the first half en route to a 50-38 halftime lead. The Blue Raiders full-court pressure forced 13 first-half turnovers by the Lady Mocs and Givens led the way on the offensive end with 15 points, including a driving lay-up just before the buzzer. Pickel hit a pair of 3-pointers in the first half and three more in the second period for a career-high 15 points in just 14 minutes of action. She took advantage of the Lady Mocs zone, knocking down 5-of-7 attempts from behind the arc. Holt was 9-for-13 from the field and 8-of-10 at the foul line for a workmanlike double-double, her second in five games this season. The Blue Raiders outrebounded UTC, 40-28, and caused 21 Lady Mocs turnovers in all. Middle Tennessee also posted a season-high 16 steals and also had 20 assists. Alex Anderson led four Chattanooga players in double figures with 16 points and eight rebounds. The Blue Raiders take on fourth-ranked Tennessee Sunday at Thompson-Boling Arena in Knoxville at 3 p.m. CT. The game will be shown live on My30 Comcast Channel 14 in the Midstate. **POSTGAME NOTES**

PICKEL GOING DOWNTOWN: Freshman Jackie Pickel was recruited for her long-range shooting

out of Bradley Central High School, but she had struggled so far this season with her shot, making just 2-of-13 (.154) heading into Friday's contest. Pickel found her stroke during the week and found the open areas in the Chattanooga zone defense on Friday, knocking down 5-of-7 3-point attempts for a career-high 15 points. The Blue Raiders tied their season-high with 12 made 3-pointers and are shooting 35 percent (43-for-122) from the behind the arc this season. **TAKING ADVANTAGE OF FREE CHANCES:** Middle Tennessee continues to excel at the foul line this season, hitting 80 percent (16-for-20) in Friday's win over Chattanooga. Junior Amber Holt is the catalyst at the charity stripe, making 8-of-10 versus the Lady Mocs and 33-for-40 (.825) this season at the line. As a team the Blue Raiders are making 79 percent from the free throw line, going 66-of-84. **HOLT WITH ANOTHER DOUBLE-DOUBLE:** Junior Amber Holt recorded her second double-double of the season with 26 points and 10 rebounds versus Chattanooga, a workmanlike effort for the first-year Blue Raider. Holt finished 9-for-13 from the field and 8-of-10 at the foul line. It marked her third 20-plus point effort in five outings this season and tied her career-high in rebounds, set versus South Dakota State on November 13. For the season the Duluth, Ga., native is shooting 43 percent (35-for-81) from the field and an outstanding 83 percent (33-for-40) at the foul line. Holt is second on the club in scoring at 21.2 points per outing and first in rebounding at 8.2 boards per game. **GIVENS MOVES UP CAREER SCORING LIST:** Senior Chrissy Givens passed two players on the all-time scoring list with her 29 points versus Chattanooga, including current teammate Krystle Horton. Givens moved into 12th place all-time at Middle Tennessee with 1,255 points, passing Kay Willbanks (1984-86, 1,236 pts) as well as Horton, who has 1,243 points during her career after a six-point outing against UTC. Givens also moved into eighth place on the career steals list with four thefts against the Lady Mocs and has 203 all-time. She needs five more steals to pass Jennifer McFall (1982-85, 205) and Cortney Neeley (1996-99, 207) for sixth. Givens stands 10th on the career FG attempts chart at Middle Tennessee with 1,042, just ahead of former teammate Tia Stovall (2003-06, 1,011). A full listing of the career records appears on Page 12 of these notes. **GIVENS THE ULTIMATE STAT-SHEET STUFFER:** Senior Chrissy Givens led Middle Tennessee in points, rebounds, assists and steals last season and currently ranks first in three of the four categories so far in 2006-07, ranking second only in rebounds. Givens tallied a season-high 29 points in Friday's win over Chattanooga, grabbing seven rebounds with five assists and four steals. She was 11-for-23 from the field, a season-high in FG attempts, and was 5-of-6 from the foul line, both season-highs. For the season Givens is averaging a team-leading 43 percent from the field (45-for-104) and 78 percent at the foul line (14-for-18) and leads the squad with 28 assists and 15 steals. Her only issue has been from behind the 3-point line, where the Monroe, La., native has greatly struggled, shooting just 18 percent (4-for-22) after hitting 34 percent last season. **TIDBITS:** Middle Tennessee's 98 points were the most under second-year head coach Rick Insell and the most since the Blue Raiders scored 99 against Eastern Illinois on January 9, 1999, a span of 235 games ... As a team Middle Tennessee set season-highs in the game with 35 field goals made and 16 steals, tied a season-high with 12 3-pointers made and shot a season-best 39 percent (12-for-31) from 3-point range ... Johnna Abney tied her season-high for the third time with three assists, second only to five from Chrissy Givens in the contest ... Senior Krystle Horton recorded a season-high five rebounds in the victory ... Freshman Brandi Brown contributed a pair of 3-pointers in the game as the Blue Raiders hit a dozen trifectas in the contest. Brown tied her season-high with six points ... With the win the Blue Raiders improved to 24-16 all-time against Chattanooga, including 13-7 at Murphy Center. Middle Tennessee has won six-in-a-row in the series at home and five-out-of-six overall in the series. **POSTGAME QUOTES**

Middle Tennessee head coach Rick Insell

on his thought's about tonight's game

"We are playing a little better offensively. I'm not real satisfied with our defensive production tonight. We've got too many people isolated and out of position. We had to cover up for their 3-point shooters. We knew they lived and died with it. We did a decent job, but we didn't do a good enough job to take us far in the tournament if we don't get better defensively." **on the defensive pressure applied to Chattanooga**

"We felt like we had to make them guard us. In doing that we had to attack the basket. When we started out, we didn't. When we started attacking the basket, [Brooke] Hand got a foul or two and [Alex] Anderson had to step in and she got a foul that hurt their offensive chemistry. [Coach] Wes [Moore] does a great job. He was able to space his players out and got some production out of them and stayed in the game." **on using defensive pressure to stifle opponents**

"We press everybody. We are going to press Tennessee Sunday. We are going to play our game. We are going to play Lady Raider basketball. Lady Raider basketball is 94 feet." **on the capitalizing on turnovers**

"We had been producing about 24 or 25 turnovers a game and it's because of our press and because we are aggressive. We foul too much and we know that, but we've got a bench that we can use this year and some of our young players did a pretty good job. Jackie [Pickel] did a good job offensively; defensively we've got to get her into some people more." **Senior Guard Chrissy Givens on the team's defensive pressure**

"We press everybody. Our press gives a lot of people problems. I felt if we came out aggressive we could cause some problems and we caused them to turnover the ball with our press." **on putting away Chattanooga in the second half**

"I guess everybody on the court smelled it. That's part of becoming a team. Once we smelled it and everybody picked it up a notch and we were even more aggressive to make them take a timeout. It shows that we press hard and when one smells blood, we all smell it and we all kick it up a notch." **on gaining confidence offensively**

"In those first two games, I kept shooting it. I think the only reason I can do it is because I have the will power and coach tells me to snatch it from the rim and put it in the hole." **on playing Tennessee**

"It's another team we have to take care of our business. We play teams like this to get ready for the tournament. I am taking the mindset we have used when we have won games and applying it to UT. We are going to play Middle Tennessee basketball. We are not worrying that they are the Lady Vols. We are worrying about what we have to do and taking it to the next level by playing teams like Tennessee." **Freshman Guard Jackie Pickel**

on her confidence shooting 3-pointers

"[Coach Insell] told me all week to be ready. I have been struggling on my shot a little bit. He is so good about the confidence factor, even if we have not been playing so well. It's a lot easier when you hit your first shot."

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