Blue Raiders Fall at #4 UT, 88-64

Game will be re-aired at 6:30 p.m. today on FOX 17 WZTV in the Midstate.

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KNOXVILLE, Tenn. - Chrissy Givens scored a game-high 26 points and freshman Brandi Brown added 12 points, but fourth-ranked Tennessee shot 57 percent from the field and blew open the game with a 23-8 run at the end of the first half en route to an 88-64 victory over Middle Tennessee Sunday at Thompson-Boling Arena. Sunday's game will be re-aired at 6:30 p.m. today on FOX 17 WZTV in the Midstate. UT's Sidney Spencer tallied a team-high 16 points for the Lady Vols (5-0), including four 3-pointers. Tennessee also made a living on the boards in the contest, outrebounding the Blue Raiders 38-22 in the contest, including 22-11 in the second half. Givens was 10-for-21 from the field, including 4-for-5 from 3-point range, while Brown also hit four 3-pointers. The Blue Raiders hit a season-high 13 trifectas in the contest. Tennessee's Candace Parker also tallied 16 points and nine rebounds, while Nicky Anosike added 13 points and Alex Fuller had 12 for the Lady Vols. UT outscored the Blue Raiders 39-37 in the second half. The Blue Raiders (3-3) started fast, with Givens hitting 3-pointers on the first two trips down the floor and Middle Tennessee leading at the first media timeout, 13-10. But the Lady Vols put together a 10-0 run for an 11-point advantage with 7:33 left in the half before the Raiders answered with two Givens free throws and a short jumper in

the lane. The free throws ended a five-plus minute scoring drought for Middle Tennessee. Tennessee then had a 23-8 run to end the half with just about everyone on the club contributing. Spencer hit a pair of 3-pointers and former Shelbyville standout Fuller had four buckets in the half, including two trifectas. The Lady Vols shot 64 percent in the first half, including 6-of-9 from 3-point range. Givens had 17 in the first half on 6-of-11 shooting, but the Blue Raiders turned the ball over 15 times in the first 20 minutes. Middle Tennessee returns to action Wednesday at former OVC rival Tennessee Tech at 5 p.m. in Cookeville. The Blue Raiders host Austin Peay Monday, December 4, at Murphy Center at 5 p.m. **POSTGAME QUOTES**

Middle Tennessee Head Coach Rick Insell

On Tennessee's trap defense

"We turned the ball over a lot in this game. We've averaged between 11 and 12 turnovers a game and turned the ball over 15 times in the first half tonight. This took us out of the game. Tennessee shot the ball 64 percent. When you combine these two stats it makes it tough to win. We didn't quit. We continued to play hard, but Tennessee has a great team." **On his speech at halftime**

"We talked about going out and getting on them quick. We knew if we opened up the floor, we wouldn't be able to guard against their size and athleticism. Our team doesn't have the size to defend [Candace] Parker, [Nicky] Anosike and [Alexis] Hornbuckle. They made some big shots early that we hoped they wouldn't make." **On Tennessee's Alex Fuller, his former player**

"She is a winner. I coached her for almost seven years coming up from middle school, to AAU and on through high school. She has a great family. She is not only going to be successful on the court as she is right now, but in the future as well. Alex has had to overcome the hardship of knee problems and has worked through it. This says a lot about the person. I'm very proud of her." **On playing Tennessee in the future**

"We would like to continue the series. We want to get the Lady Vols into Murfreesboro. [UT head coach] Pat [Summitt] and I have been friends since the late 70's. She has built the program [at Tennessee] while I was coaching at Shelbyville. If we want to take [the Middle Tennessee] program to the next level, we are going to have to play teams like Tennessee to get it there. What this game did was help us. We know what we have to work on. We were intimidated by their lateral quickness, but we have to get over that." **On Middle Tennessee's ability to stay with Tennessee early in the game**

"I wasn't shocked by this. We've got a good team. I'm real proud of what we've done so far. We still have to play Georgia, Old Dominion as well as the Sun Belt Conference. The Sun Belt is not an easy conference. Out of the 31 conferences in the country, the Sun Belt ranks ninth and we think by the end of the season it could be as high as sixth. All of the Sun Belt teams have beaten tough teams around the country so far this season." **On Tennessee's ability to shoot 3-point shots**

"We were hoping they wouldn't be able to make some of those 3-pointers. We hoped that [Shannon] Bobbitt and [Cait] McMahan would take some of the 3-point shots because those two had been looking to pass more than shoot. But they came out and hit their shots and played great." **On comparing Tennessee with Maryland**

"They are two great teams. It wouldn't surprise me to see both of them in the Final 4. The difference was we played Maryland at Middle Tennessee and we might have had a slight home court advantage. Tennessee might have had a slight home court advantage today. It was the first game of the year when we played Maryland. Some of things we did bothered them. Neither team had a large amount of film on the other team." **On what Middle Tennessee will take away from the loss to Tennessee**

"This game prepared us not only for our next game, but the rest of the season. Our goal is to go deeper into the NCAA Tournament where we will have to play teams like a Tennessee or Maryland

in order to get to the Sweet Sixteen and beyond. We can take this film and study it to help us down the road." **On women's basketball in the state of Tennessee**

"The greatest fans are from the state of Tennessee. We are building a great fan base at Middle Tennessee. Tennessee has already built an excellent fan base. Tennessee knows and loves women's basketball." **Middle Tennessee Senior Guard Chrissy Givens**

On her performance verse Tennessee

"It is nice to score 20 or more points in a game, but we still lost. The only stat that matters is the win. We always play to win. It is almost as if I did not score anything." **On her mindset playing at Thompson-Boling Arena**

"That is what I love about our team. We have a mindset that no matter who we play, we aren't going to be intimidated by anybody. The team's mindset was that of any other game. We knew we had to come out and play well. We knew who we were playing and that it would be tough, but we knew we had to play with fight and toughness. You can't be scared." **On defending Tennessee**

"Every player for them was almost six inches taller than us at every position. Even if we got a hand in their face, they were still shooting over us. They shot very well from 3-point territory. We weren't counting on them shooting as well as they did. Rebounding hurt us. Their second chance opportunities should have been half what we gave them. But defense is all about heart. You don't need the best skills to play defense, but you must play with heart and want to go out and guard someone."

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