Defense Forces 29 Turnovers in 93-58 Victory

Blue Raiders start conference play with win

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MOBILE, Ala. - Chrissy Givens tied her season-high with 29 points to lead four double-figure scorers and Middle Tennessee overcame a sluggish start to both halves, forcing 29 turnovers in a 93-58 victory over South Alabama Thursday night at Mitchell Center. South Alabama (5-5, 0-1 Sun Belt) began the game with a 13-4 run and started the second half with 12 straight points, but the Blue Raiders' defense was the big difference in the game, as the pressure forced 20 first-half turnovers by the Lady Jags and 29 in all. Middle Tennessee (7-3, 1-0) freshman Brandi Brown finished with a career-high 17 points, hitting 5-of-8 from 3-point range, and Amber Holt added 16 points, as the Blue Raiders won the fourth straight in the series, including three in a row in Mobile. Senior Krystle Horton also scored 10 points, all in the second half, and added a team-high seven rebounds. "The score is really not indicative of the game. We came out sluggish in both halves but I thought our 1-2-2 press bothered them and that was a big difference," head coach Rick Insell said. "We shot the ball well and what a night for Brandi Brown to come out and play well. She hit some three's and loosened up things for us." Givens netted 17 of her 29 in the first half and had seven assists, four rebounds and four steals in 36 minutes of action. She tied her career-high with 14 made field goals. The Blue Raiders were 19-of-34 in both halves from the floor and turned the ball over just 12 times in the contest. The Blue Raiders got off to a rough start and fell behind 13-4 in the first six minutes of the

contest, but recovered with a 16-0 run over five minutes for a 20-13 edge. Givens and Holt both scored six points and Chelsia Lymon had four during the run. The Blue Raiders turned up the pressure on defense after falling behind. South Alabama committed 10 turnovers during the Blue Raiders' run back into the game and had 20 first-half turnovers in all. Middle Tennessee outscored USA, 44-10, over the final 14 minutes of the half for a 48-23 lead at the break. In the second half South Alabama tallied 12 consecutive points in less than four minutes until Givens hit a runner in the lane that drew a foul to end the run. Brown then hit her fourth 3-pointer of the contest and Starr Orr had two buckets, including one of the team's 10 3-pointers. "I was relaxed tonight, ready to play and more focused," Brown said. "I was looking for my shot more, more offensive-minded, and I know [Coach Insell] would rather us take the shot than pass it up." Middle Tennessee opens Sun Belt home action Sunday at 1:30 p.m. against Louisiana-Monroe. The game is part of a doubleheader with the Blue Raider men, who play 30 minutes following the completion of the women's game.

POSTGAME NOTES

GIVENS KEEPS ON SCORING: Senior Chrissy Givens tied her season-high with 29 points in the contest and tied her career-high with 14 field goals made. It marks the seventh time in eight games Givens has scored 20-plus points. She also tied her season-high with seven assists, the third time this season Givens has dished out seven dimes in a contest, and made four steals with four rebounds. **BROWN FROM DOWNTOWN:** Freshman Brandi Brown picked a great time to have a career night, scoring a season-high 17 points on 6-of-10 shooting from the field, including hitting five 3-pointers. Brown also posted season-highs with five rebounds and 24 minutes played, set season-highs with her FG made and FG attempts and tied season-highs with 3-pt. FG atttempts (8) and assists (2). It was her third double-figure scoring game of the season after netting 12 points at fourth-ranked Tennessee and 10 at Tennessee Tech. Brown has hit 17 trifectas this season, 12 in the last five games. **HORTON CONTINUES HITTING THE BOARDS:** Senior Krystle Horton continued her resurgence on the glass, grabbing a game-high seven rebounds and adding 10 points, all in the second half. In the last four contests Horton has registered 31 rebounds, an average of 7.8 per game, raising her season rebounding average to 5.3 per outing. Horton has grabbed 58 percent of her season's boards in the last four games, all Blue Raider wins. **GIVENS MOVES UP SCORING LIST:** Senior Chrissy Givens passed two former Blue Raiders on the all-time scoring list after her 29-point effort. Givens passed Heather Prater (1,348, 1993-96) and former teammate Tia Stovall (1,351, 2003-06) to move into 10th place on the career points list and has 1,376 heading into Sunday's contest versus Louisiana-Monroe. Givens needs 77 points to move into ninth place and pass Sherry Tucker (1,452, 1992-95). Givens can easily reach seventh place on the all-time list this season, with only Stephanie Capley (1,464, 1988-91) and Sharon McClanahan (1,464, 1976-79) ahead of Tucker. **GIVENS CONTINUES MOVE UP OTHER CAREER LISTS:** Senior Chrissy Givens continued her upward movement into the Top 10 in four other categories after her performance against South Alabama. Givens registered four steals in the game, tying Jessica McClure (1999-02) for fifth on the all-time list with 213 thefts. Sheery Tucker (221, 1992-95) is fourth on the career list and former teammate Keisha McClinic (246, 2001-04) stands third. Givens' seven assists in the contest gives her 332 in her career, just three assists from moving past Lianne Beck (334, 1986-89) and into the Top 10. Givens made 14 field goals in the victory, as well, moving into 10th with 535 career makes. She passed Jonelda Buck (523, 1996-99) for 10th and teammate Krystle Horton (526) is right behind. Givens also ranks 10th on the FG attempts list with 1,133 and needs 104 more shots to move past Stephanie Capley (1,236, 1988-91) for ninth. **TIDBITS:** Middle Tennessee made a team season-high 38 field goals in the game, the most in a contest this season by any Sun Belt Conference team. The Blue Raiders also shot a team season-best 56 percent from the field in the game (38-for-68) ... Middle Tennessee scored 45 points off turnovers in the game and has scored

265 points off 236 opponent turnovers this season ... Amber Holt tied her career-high with two 3-pointers in the game, going a perfect 2-for-2 and hitting both on consecutive trips down the floor in the second half ... The Blue Raiders have won four straight in the series against South Alabama, including three in a row in Mobile.

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