

Givens Nets Season-High 33 in 75-62 Triumph

Blue Raiders Run Winning Streak to 14 games

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LITTLE ROCK, Ark. - Chrissy Givens scored a season-high 33 points and 20th-ranked Middle Tennessee fought off a second-half rally, defeating Arkansas-Little Rock, 75-62, Saturday night at Jack Stephens Center. The Blue Raiders (17-3, 9-0 Sun Belt) did not play with their usual defensive intensity but played well enough to extend their winning streak to 14 games overall, tying for the third longest in the nation. The Blue Raiders shot 50 percent in the first half but did not play well defensively, forcing just seven turnovers by the Trojans. Givens had 16 at the break, but the Blue Raiders were just



4-of-14 from 3-point range and Amber Holt played just six minutes after picking up two fouls. Middle Tennessee did not attempt a field goal in the final 2:45 of the half, but still led 37-24 at the break. Middle Tennessee opened the second half with a 10-3 run for a 47-27 with 15:46 remaining. But the Trojans slowly clawed their way back into the game, mostly at the foul line, cutting the deficit to 56-46 with 7:54 to play after a lay-up from Andrea Keys. It was the closest UALR had been in the game since it was 16-7 with 14 minutes to play in the first half. Givens answered with a bucket to end the run and Johnna Abney hit a 3-pointer from the wing with 5:22 remaining to stretch the lead back to 13, ending a run of seven consecutive missed trifectas by the Blue Raiders. Middle Tennessee was just 6-of-23 from behind the arc, but Givens went 13-for-22 from the field and 6-for-7 at the foul line, leading three double figure scorers. Holt scored 13 points, nine in the second half, and Krystle Horton had 10 points and seven rebounds. UALR made 20-of-25 foul shots and was led by Anshel Cooper off the bench, who scored 20 points. Kim Sitzmann netted 18 points and Renee Renz had 11. "We didn't shoot the ball very well from 3-point range and the thing about was, they were good looks," head coach Rick Insell said. "We had good looks and just didn't put them down. When you don't do that, you're going to leave good teams in the game. "You have to give them credit. They have a good team and are well-coached. They have some good basketball players - [Renee] Renz has some good moves - and Sitzmann handled the pressure very well, better than I thought she would." Middle Tennessee travels to Denton, Texas, to face North Texas Wednesday at 7 p.m. The Blue Raiders return home, taking on Louisiana-Lafayette on January 28 at 2 p.m. **NOTES**

RICK INSELL RADIO SHOW MONDAY: The Rick Insell Radio Show airs again Monday at 6 p.m. from Bluesboro on the square in Murfreesboro. There are no calls taken for the show and it only airs on 88.3 FM WMTS. The Rick Insell Radio Show airs every Monday at 6 p.m. for the rest of the season. **AUTOGRAPH SESSION SET FOR JANUARY 28:** Fans will have the opportunity to receive autographs from their favorite Middle Tennessee players and coaches after the Blue Raiders take on Louisiana-Lafayette on Sunday, January 28. Game time is set for 2 p.m. and the autograph session will follow the game. **NATIONAL GIRLS AND WOMEN IN SPORTS DAY UPCOMING:** Middle Tennessee will host the annual Girls and Women in Sports Day on Saturday, February 3, in conjunction with the women's basketball game against South Alabama that begins at 3 p.m. Interested parties may purchase a \$10 that includes a game ticket, a hot dog and a soda. A two-hour clinic prior to the game is also part of the day as well as all of the girls being recognized at halftime of the game. Call the Middle Tennessee Ticket Office at 615/898-2103 or 1-888-YES-MTSU.

POSTGAME NOTES

GIVENS GOES FOR 33: Senior Chrissy Givens netted a season-high 33 points on 13-for-22 shooting and 6-of-7 at the foul line. Givens scored 16 points in the first half and 17 after halftime. She also added six rebounds, three assists and three steals in playing all 40 minutes, her ninth 40-minute outing this season and first since December 27 against Western Kentucky. **ROAD WARRIORS:** Middle Tennessee posted its ninth win away from Murphy Center this season and improved to 8-1 in road games. The Blue Raiders won their seventh consecutive road game against Arkansas-Little Rock, a school record, besting the previous mark of six held by four teams and previously recorded in 1995. **CONFERENCE START AT THE TOP:** Middle Tennessee improved to 9-0 with the victory, the best conference start since the 1987-88 club began OVC action with 12 straight victories. The win over Arkansas-Little Rock bested the 1996 team's start of eight consecutive wins to begin the conference slate. The 12 straight in 1987-88 is the longest streak to begin conference play. The 1984-85 squad won 11 straight and the 1982-83 club was victorious in all 10 of its OVC games. **WIN STREAK REACHES 14:** The 75-62 victory over Arkansas-Little Rock ran the Middle Tennessee winning streak to 14 games, the second longest streak in school history and tying for the third longest winning streak in the nation. The longest winning stretch in Blue Raider history is 15 games, set from January 12-February 26, 1987. Middle Tennessee's last loss came November 26 at fourth-ranked Tennessee. **RECORDS UPDATE:** Senior Krystle Horton started her 98th career game, tying Priscilla Robinson (1991-94) for ninth on the all-time list. Horton also played in her 115th career game, tying Cyndi Lindley-Allen (1982-84, '86'), Jennifer McFall (1982-85), Janet Ross (1984-87) and Kelly Chastain (1997-00) for fifth on the all-time list ... Horton grabbed seven rebounds in the contest, moving out of tie with Lindley-Allen and into 13th place on the all-time charts. Horton has 640 career rebounds ... Chrissy Givens had six rebounds in the game, giving her 603 career boards ... Givens hit 13 field goals in the contest, passing Sharon McClanahan (1976-79) for seventh on the career FG made list with 614. Givens also took 22 shots in the game, moving past McClanahan and Sherry Tucker (1992-95) and into sixth on the all-time FG attempts list with 1,279 attempts ... Sophomore Johnna Abney hit a pair of 3-pointers in the contest, passing Paula Penttila (2000-03) and moving into ninth on the all-time list with 102 made trifectas ... Horton scored 10 points in the contest, her sixth double-figure scoring game this season and the 70th of her career. She moved out of a tie with Sherry Tucker and into ninth on the career double-figure scoring list ... Givens' 33 points was her 69th career double-figure scoring game, tying Tucker for 10th on the list. **TIDBITS:** Middle Tennessee committed a season-low eight turnovers in the game. The previous low was nine at eighth-ranked Georgia ... The Blue Raiders improved to 22-4 against Sun Belt competition under second-year head coach Rick Insell, including 8-4 on the road ... Middle Tennessee upped its record to 35-3 over the last two seasons and 17-0 under Insell when leading at

the half. **POSTGAME QUOTES**

Head Coach Rick Insell

"We didn't shoot the ball very well from 3-point range and the thing about was, they were good looks," head coach Rick Insell said. "We had good looks and just didn't put them down. When you don't do that, you're going to leave good teams in the game. Two or three times we were up 16 or 17, came back and didn't knock a shot down. If we had, it might've opened the door a little wider. "You have to give them credit. They played hard. They have a good team and are well-coached. They have some good basketball players - [Renee] Renz has some great moves inside. "Sitzmann, the freshman guard, is as good as anyone in the conference. I didn't think she could handle the pressure like she did but she did and handled it well. They were very methodical and we got some key turnovers at some key times that helped us get a 13-point win. That's the bottom line." **On**

Chrissy Givens

"That's why she's the MVP of the [Sun Belt]. She can do things no one else can. **Senior Chrissy Givens**

On shooting more than normal

"It was kind of that way the whole game. We usually shoot the 3-ball extremely well, but tonight was one of those nights when it wasn't going for us. Brandi [Brown] and Jackie [Pickel] and Johnna [Abney] have done so much in hitting that 3-point shot. When they're off, people like me and Krystle [Horton] and Amber [Holt] have to pick up the slack. I just felt like this is what I owed [my team], to go put the ball in the hole when they're not hitting."

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