

Raiders Fall in Second Round

Marist ends record-breaking season

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PALO ALTO, Calif. - Middle Tennessee played from behind almost the entire game and every time the 17th-ranked Blue Raiders made a run, Marist answered, as the Red Foxes advanced to the Sweet 16 with a 73-59 victory Monday night at Maples Pavilion. The loss ended Middle Tennessee's season and its 27-game winning streak along the way. Marist hit every shot at crucial times and Middle Tennessee missed several excellent opportunities to take the lead in the second half, including a missed lay-up on a breakaway by Starr Orr and a missed two-footer from Amber Holt. Marist also handled the Blue Raider press as well as any team all season, committing just 12 turnovers, including only seven in the first half. Middle Tennessee went to a triangle-and-two defense in the second half to slow down guards Flores, Alisa Kresge and



Julianna Viani, but Meg Dahlman scored seven of her 13 points after the break and Lynzee Johnson came off the bench to net seven points, all in the second half, including a big 3-pointer with 7:40 to play in the game. The Red Foxes started the game on fire, hitting eight of their first 11 shots and racing out to a 17-11 advantage. Marist led 19-11 before the Blue Raiders ran off nine straight points to take a brief lead. But the Red Foxes answered with 21-9 run over the final eight minutes of the half to take a 40-29 lead at halftime. Flores and Viani both scored 11 points in the opening 20 minutes, including a trio of 3-pointers from Viani. Chrissy Givens scored 12 of Middle Tennessee's 19 points in the half, but the Blue Raiders made just 36 percent from the field, including 4-of-16 from 3-point range. But Middle Tennessee's triangle defense at the start of the second half got the Blue Raiders back in the game. Middle Tennessee scored the first eight points of the half before Rachele

Fitz hit a baseline jumper for the first Marist basket of the half with 16:39 remaining. The Blue Raiders for within 42-40 but no closer, going more than three minutes without a bucket twice in the second half and the final 4:22 of the first half. Middle Tennessee dared Kresge to shoot and her trifecta from the wing with 12:54 to play pushed the Marist advantage to 47-40. The Blue Raiders pulled to 52-47 before Johnson's 3-pointer gave the Red Foxes lead back to eight. The Blue Raiders would get no closer, as Johnson came down a minute later and converted an old fashioned 3-point play. Viani finished with 13 points and Fitz added 10, while Dahlman had a game-high nine rebounds. Givens led the Blue Raiders with 16 points, while Krystle Horton added 10 points and six rebounds. Holt was just 2-for-10 from the field and Middle Tennessee made only 7-of-26 from the 3-point line, though Jackie Pickel had a trio of trifectas and Brandi Brown added a pair. The Blue Raiders end the season 30-4 overall, making their fourth straight NCAA Tournament and winning a first round game for the third time in four seasons. Middle Tennessee broke the school record for victories and finished 21-0 against Sun Belt opponents.

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