Middle Tennessee Stumbles at FAU Classic 70-65

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BOCA RATON, Fla. - Middle Tennessee (2-1) dropped a 70-65 decision to Manhattan College (2-0) Friday in the Florida Atlantic/Embassy Suites Classic.

Manhattan College was 7-of-8 from the charity stripe in the final minute of the game to keep the Lady Raiders at bay. Junior guard Patrice Holmes hit a big three at the top of the key with 10 seconds left in the game to pull the Lady Raiders within four, 69-65, but Lady Raider miscues stifled the team's chance to trim the lead even more. Senior Keisha McClinic forced a turnover from Manhattan College but her bounce pounce to Cartia Bailey went over her head and the ball fell back in the hands of Manhattan who then iced the game on with 1-of-2 free throws from Donette Reed.

Turnovers plagued the Lady Raiders as the team gave away 27 in the game, the most all season. Manhattan College only had 15 turnovers in the game.

"Turning the ball over 27 times is not going to win you a basketball game," said head coach Stephany Smith. "We ran the zone a lot tonight and I thought at times we ran it well, but couldn't convert in key times in the game."

Middle Tennessee led for the first 10 minutes of the second half until Manhattan's Nikoletta Deutsch hit her third three pointer of the game to give the Jaspers' the lead 53-51. Manhattan then went on a 9-0 run to extend the lead to 59-51. A pair of Ciara Gray free throws broke the Lady Raiders' five-minute dry spell, but Deutsch extended the Manhattan lead again with her fourth three of the game.

Chrissy Givens' easy lay-up under the basket pulled the Lady Raiders within five with three minutes to go, 56-61. Manhattan moved back to seven with two free throws by Danielle Cooper to make it 63-56. Tia Stovall put the Lady Raiders back to down five with a little put back, and McClinic's open bucket under the basket put the Lady Raiders within three 60-63.

Middle Tennessee was down by 12 points in the middle of the first half, but went on a 23-9 run in the final eight minutes to lead 35-32 going into the locker room. The Lady Raiders rode the arm of Holmes who scored nine points in the run and also had six steals.

Holmes recorded her second double-double in just three games with 18 points and 10 rebounds and also snagged six steals. The two Lady Raider freshman were the two other Middle Tennessee players in double figures as Krystle Horton notched 16 points and Givens scored 10.

Middle Tennessee will play in the consolation game of the tournament on Saturday. Tip-off is set for 5 p.m. and the Lady Raiders will play Norfolk State.

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