

# Lady Raiders Fall Short to Houston 67-63

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**MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -** Middle Tennessee (9-3) came up short 67-63 to Houston (9-2) Monday afternoon in the Murphy Center.

After being down by 16 (39-55) with 13:58 left in the game Middle Tennessee cut the lead down by four (60-56) with 5:54 to play. Krystle Horton hit a 10-foot lay up to cut the lead to four after the Lady Raiders went on a 15-5 run in that span.

After a back-and-forth game Houston pulled back to an eight-point lead on a pair of free throws by Chandi Jones. Middle Tennessee answered with free throws by Keisha McClinic and Tia Stovall to again trim the lead to four with 1:38 to play.



After a missed bucket by Houston's Jones, which sailed out of bounds, Middle Tennessee took possession of the ball and looked to trim the lead, but Houston's Nicole Oliver picked Patrice Holmes' pocket and the Cougars took possession of the ball. With 33 seconds left to play Houston's Jones hit a jumper to make the scored 67-61.

Middle Tennessee fouled Jones with 10 seconds left to play and she missed the front end of a one-and-one. The Lady Raiders raced back down the court and got a lay-up by Jennifer Justice with four seconds left to play. The game ended on a missed jumper by Houston's Kiemona Harris.

Horton led the Lady Raiders with 18 points and also had four steals. Holmes recorded her fourth double-double of the year with 17 points and 10 rebounds. Senior Keisha McClinci rounded out the double figure scoring for the Lady Raiders with 11.

Middle Tennessee returns to action on Thursday when the Lady Raiders host Southeastern Conference member Alabama. Tip-off is set for 5:30 p.m. in double header action with the Blue Raiders.

**NOTES:**

**DOUBLE-DOUBLE FOR HOLMES:** Point guard Patrice Holmes recorded her fourth double-double of the season and the 10th of her career with 17 points and 10 boards against Houston. It was also the seventh by the team this year as Krystal Horton owns the other three.

**PLAYER OF THE GAME:** Members of the media voted freshman Krystal Horton as the Alexander Automotive Family Player of the Game. Horton tallied a team-high 18 points on 8-for-10 shooting in 33 minutes of action.

**40-MINUTE GIRL:** Patrice Holmes is the Lady Raiders' iron woman after registering her ninth 40-minute game of the year against Houston. In fact, out of a possible 480 minutes of action this year Holmes has been on the floor for 469 minutes. Over the past two years, Holmes has played 40 minutes in 21 games.

**STRONG DEFENSIVE EFFORT:** Against a very good Houston team, the Lady Raiders did their part on the defensive end of the floor by holding the Lady Cougars to 38 percent shooting. The Lady Raiders stepped it up even more in the second half by forcing UH into 28 percent shooting from the field and holding them to just 27 points. It wasn't enough, however, as the Lady Cougars owned a five-point advantage from behind the arc to be the difference in the game.

**TOO MANY MISCUES:** The Lady Raiders were hurt today by committing 20 turnovers, including 19 by the starting five. It marks the most turnovers by the Lady Raiders since registering 24 against Norfolk State on Nov. 29 and is the most this year at home.

**AFTERNOON DELIGHT:** The unusual mid-week starting time of 2 PM was done in order to accommodate Houston's travel plans. The Lady Cougars needed to fly out tonight due to their next game being scheduled for Wednesday; therefore, the contest had to tip in the afternoon. It was the first time in the Stephany Smith era the Lady Raiders had played a home mid-week afternoon contest.

**TIDBITS:** The Lady Raiders are now 13-22 against teams from Conference USA ... Jennifer Justice dished out a season-high four assists against Houston ... Chrissy Givens matched her personal-best with four rebounds in the loss to Houston ... Today was only the second time this year Middle Tennessee has trailed at the half ...

**NEXT UP:** The Lady Raiders will host SEC foe Alabama on Thursday at 5:30 PM in a doubleheader with the men. The MT-UA game will be shown on ESPN Regional with a tip-off time of 5:35 PM.

**QUOTES:**

**Patrice Holmes:** "We made a lot of crucial turnovers during the span when we were trying to cut into Houston's lead. We didn't really have a problem with match-ups. We just weren't checking in with the press very well."

**Stephany Smith:** "We got off to a slow start and had problems against the press that we shouldn't have had. We did turn it over some in the first half against the press, but it wasn't so much our performance against the press as it was our shot selection. Basketball is a game of mistakes and it's also a game of runs so every team is going to have their moments. It's hard to fight from so far

down, and they were knocking down three pointers and we were having a hard time scoring on offense. It was a combination of things that dug us a hole that was pretty deep.

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