

# Lady Raiders Snap South Alabama's 14-Game Winning Streak

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**MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -** Middle Tennessee (11-5, 1-2 SBC) snapped South Alabama's (14-2, 2-1 SBC) 14-game winning streak as the Lady Raiders picked up their first Sun Belt win of the season 56-55.

South Alabama had a chance to take the lead with nine seconds left in the game but Qiana Mitchell missed a jumper. Lady Raider Patrice Holmes pulled down the rebound and sealed the victory for Middle Tennessee.

Middle Tennessee took the lead with 1:10 left in the game off a jumper by Holmes to make it 55-53. Junior guard Ciara Gray extended the lead when she hit the back-end of two free throws to push the score to 56-53.



The Jaguar's Donyel Wheeler pulled USA back within one when she hit a running jumper with 12 seconds left. Freshman forward Krystle Horton had a chance to put the game out of reach for the Lady Raiders but missed both her free throws.

Middle Tennessee had to battle back after allowing South Alabama to go on a 12-0 run to start the second half. The Lady Raiders went almost seven minutes without scoring before Horton broke the drought with a lay-up. The Lady Raiders then proceeded to go on a run of their own tying the game 45-45 at the nine-minute mark on a 17-5 scoring frenzy.

Holmes recorded a double-double with 14 points and 10 rebounds. Horton added 13 points in the game and Gray poured in 10.

Middle Tennessee hosts New Orleans Saturday in the Murphy Center. Tip-off is set for 7 p.m.

**NOTES:**

**STREAK BREAKERS:** Middle Tennessee upset South Alabama on Thursday night, 56-55, to end the Jaguars 14-game winning streak. USA lost the opening game of the year then reeled off 14 straight victories before seeing it come to an end against MT. Ironically, both of USA's losses this year have come to teams from the state of Tennessee (MT and Vanderbilt).

**PLAYER OF THE GAME:** Members of the media voted junior Krystal Horton as the Alexander Automotive Family Player of the Game. Horton added 13 points, five rebounds and two blocks.

**NO THREES:** Middle Tennessee failed to hit a three-pointer tonight against USA for the first time this season. In fact, it was the first time the Lady Raiders have not connected on a trifecta since March 9, 2003 against New Orleans.

**DOUBLE-DOUBLE FOR HOLMES:** Patrice Holmes recorded her 11th career double-double and the fifth of the season with 14 points and 10 boards against the Jaguars. The Lady Raiders now have nine double-doubles on the season with the other four coming from freshman Krystal Horton.

**MCCLINIC MATCHES CAREER-HIGH ... AGAIN:** For the second time this season, senior Keisha McClinic matched her career-best with seven steals. McClinic also added seven steals earlier this season against Alabama. The seven thefts against USA gives McClinic 54 on the season which ties Patrice Holmes for the team lead and also matches her career season-best total set during the 2001-02 campaign.

**TIDBITS:** The Lady Raiders had just six assists on 21 field goals against USA ... The Lady Raiders owned a 15-8 advantage on the offensive glass in the win over USA ... MT ran its record to 10-1 on the season when leading at the half ... Tia Stovall came of the bench for the first time this season and added eight points and six boards ... Middle Tennessee shot below 40 percent for the third time in the last four games (.382) ... The Lady Raiders made 14 free throws and USA only attempted six all night ... The last three home games have been decided by four points or less and one went to overtime.

**NEXT UP:** The Lady Raiders will host New Orleans on Saturday to complete the two-game homestand. Tip-off is scheduled for 7 PM.

**QUOTES:**

**MT Head Coach Stephany Smith:** "Until the first media timeout of the second half, I was really frustrated with our defense. We knew what had been successful for us in the first half, and we knew that is what we had to do in the second half. But, we were very lethargic. I was very frustrated trying to get us motivated to pressure the basketball. But, once we started pressuring the basketball, I thought that took care of our offensive drought. I just thought it was a huge defensive game for us. We had several steals that led to transition baskets. That is something we need to do more is score in transition. When you have to go down and score five-on-five every time, buckets are hard to come by."

"Obviously, we are glad we are not 0-3 [in the conference]. We did not want to be there. But, we have a talented basketball team. We just kind of lost our way that one weekend. We needed to get back to the basics, and I thought we did. Again, I think defense was a huge key in our win tonight. I

have said all year long, this team can be a special team because of its ability to defend. When we don't do that, it makes us stagnant in other aspects of the game."

**MT Guard Ciara Gray:** "I thought that I had to step up. Our team just looked down. I am tired of losing, so I knew we had to win. And, I wanted to win. So, I had to pick them up. The only way I can do that is doing what I can do as a player. And, that is what I did."

**MT Guard Patrice Holmes:** "We wanted to use our size advantage against them. So, we tried to post them up. They are a good defensive rebounding team, so we wanted to go to the offensive boards hard."

"I always want the ball in my hands. I feel like I am the go-to player on the team. So, when we get down and need a basket, I feel like it is my job to score."

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