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Blue Raiders Knock Off No. 8 LSU, 67-56

Holt scores 41 points, tying for second most in school history

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - [Amber Holt](#) scored a career-high 41 points, tying for the second most in school history, and added nine rebounds and [Emily Queen](#) grabbed 12 boards, as Middle Tennessee outlasted eighth-ranked LSU, 67-56, Friday night at Murphy Center in front of 7,858, the second largest crowd in school history.

The win for Middle Tennessee marks the second year in a row the Blue Raiders have knocked off a team ranked in the Top 10 after beating eighth-ranked Georgia last season in Athens. It is also just the second victory over a Top 10-ranked program at home in school history and only the third win over a Top 10 program ever for Middle Tennessee.

Holt tied Tawanya Mucker for the second most points in school history and fell just one shy of Kim Webb's school record of 42. Holt became the first player to score 40 for Middle Tennessee since Mucker's 41 against Austin Peay on January 25, 1988.

The Blue Raider senior did it from all areas of the court, hitting short jumpers in the lane, fade-away jumpers over bigger defenders and mid-range jumpers in the second half. She scored 22 of her 41 points in the second half, continuing her trend for the whole season where she has scored in double figures in every game after halftime.

Middle Tennessee needed every one of the points to hold off the Lady Tigers, who were without 6-foot-6 All-American Sylvia Fowles, who underwent knee surgery this week and will be sidelined for 2-4 weeks.

The Blue Raiders made only eight field goals in the first half against LSU's stifling defense. Holt had seven of the buckets and 19 points in the opening 20 minutes, as the home team took a 25-22 advantage at intermission.

Middle Tennessee missed a chance to expand the lead in the first half, though, hitting just 9-of-15 at the foul line. But the Blue Raiders outrebounded the much taller Lady Tigers, 24-20, with Queen grabbing a career-high nine before the break.

In the second half the home team continued to apply the pressure and feed Holt on the block, where she scooped and faded for bucket after bucket. Senior [Starr Orr](#) also played a big role after the break, teaming with Holt for a two-man game and hitting two big baskets, including an old-fashioned 3-point play that put the Raiders ahead by eight with 15:48 left in the contest.

Middle Tennessee continued to expand the lead to as many as 10 after Orr's driving layup with 11:44 to play, but the Lady Tigers would not go away, cutting into the deficit behind the long-range shooting of Quianna Chaney. The senior hit a pair of trifectas during a 17-7 LSU run that tied the contest at 49 with 5:48 remaining.

Chaney's 3-pointer from the wing gave LSU its final lead of the game at 54-53 with 4:34 left. The next sequence of plays summed up the entire game for the Blue Raiders, who made all of the necessary plays, even when it looked like LSU might take over the game.

Orr missed a jumper from the elbow but Holt got the offensive rebound and passed outside to [Johnna Abney](#), who took a 3-pointer from the opposite side. Holt again ran down the weakside rebound and handed off to [Brandi Brown](#), who hit a dagger of a 3-pointer right in front of the Blue Raider bench to put Middle Tennessee ahead for good.

Two other key plays in the game were made by the Blue Raiders, one on a scramble near halfcourt and another by Brown to Holt. With Middle Tennessee ahead 42-37 and LSU starting to mount a comeback, the Lady Tigers forced a loose ball that bounced off several hands and out near midcourt. Abney stepped forward and deflected the ball, which ended up in [Anne Marie Lanning's](#) hands on the wing. Lanning passed to Holt slashing to the goal for a layup and the foul, temporarily holding off LSU.

Brown may have made the biggest pass of the game, grabbing a rebound with 2:44 to play and the Blue Raiders clinging to a two-point advantage. She threw a great outlet pass to Holt ahead of everyone. Holt used her body against 6-foot-3 Meshia Williams,



Amber Holt scored a career-high 41 points, tying for the second most in school history, and added nine rebounds in Middle Tennessee's 67-56 victory Friday night over eighth-ranked LSU. (Bradley Lambert)

hitting the layup and drawing the foul.

Allison Hightower led the Lady Tigers with 13 points, while Chaney added 11 and Marian Whitfield came off the bench with 10.

Holt was the only Blue Raider in double figures, making 15-of-26 shots from the field and 11-for-12 at the foul line. Middle Tennessee forced 21 turnovers by the Lady Tigers and converted those into 24 points.

Middle Tennessee hits the road for a pair of games over the next week, facing Louisville Sunday at Freedom Hall before taking on rival Western Kentucky next Thursday at Diddle Arena.

POSTGAME NOTES

[Amber Holt](#) scored a career-high 41 points, tying Tawanya Mucker for the second most in school history in a single game. Mucker twice netted 41 points, December 2, 1988, vs. Mississippi College and January 25, 1988, vs. Austin Peay. Holt set career-highs for FG made (15) and FT made (11) and tied her career-high with 12 free throw attempts. The 15 field goals ties for seventh most in a single game in school history. It marks the eighth time this season in 12 games she has scored 20-plus points and her third 30-plus point effort of the year ... [Johnna Abney](#) set career-highs for FT made (5) and FT attempts (6). Her previous highs were four in both categories against Arkansas State on March 6, 2006 ... [Brandi Brown](#) grabbed a career-high six rebounds and also played 40 minutes for the first time in her career. Her previous high for minutes was 37 at Maryland on Dec. 13 of this year ... Middle Tennessee posted season-highs for free throws (22) and FT made (29). The Blue Raiders had season-lows in FG attempts (54), 3-point FG attempts (16), assists (7) and blocks (0) ... The win for Middle Tennessee marks the second year in a row the Blue Raiders have knocked off a team ranked in the Top 10 after beating eighth-ranked Georgia last season in Athens. It is also just the second victory over a Top 10-ranked program at home in school history and only the third win over a Top 10 program ever for Middle Tennessee.

Postgame Quotes

Head coach Rick Insell

On surviving a late run by LSU

"[Quianna] Chaney got hot there and was feeling it. We had to shut her down. We got mixed up on some defensive assignments and didn't switch and left her, and she made some uncontested shots. That's what winners do. That's why they have a great team. We came back and we got a long rebound, we got a steal out front with Johnna [Abney] and Brandi [Brown] was able to slip and they were able to find her. Brandi has been knocking everything down lately. That was a big three she knocked down. It gave us the momentum right back and I think it took a little bit of wind out of them."

On the pregame status of Sylvia Fowles

"Last night I took [LSU head coach] Van [Chancellor] out for dinner. He didn't say anything about it. When I got home and it was on the bottom line ticker on ESPN, that's how I found out. That's what I told him before the game. 'You sorry thing, you knew Fowles had an operation and you never mentioned it to me last night.' Van's a great coach. They've got a great team and they're going to do well. Don't be surprised if you see them back in the Final Four."

On his defensive gameplan

"When we knew Fowles wasn't going to be there, we knew we weren't going to have to play above the rim. We were very much concerned about playing above the rim because she goes to a different level. We were going to have to double on her, which was going to leave (RaShonta) LeBlanc and [Quianna] Chaney open a little bit. We were willing to give up that, but I don't know if we could have given it up if Chaney was going to shoot the ball as well as she did late in the second half. When we found out that she was not going to be there, we went back to our regular game plan. We started changing our presses. We got up in them a little in the first half and got a few turnovers there, and then we brought it back to a three-quarter court, then we changed to a contain, then we went to a deny. We just changed our presses up and wanted to give them different looks about every two or three possessions down the floor. My coaching staff did a great job."

On his team's aggressiveness

"I thought we were playing tentative. I couldn't believe it, but I thought we were backing off a little bit. And then Amber just said heck, give me the basketball and she went out and starting attacking. When she did, the rest of them (did as well). Starr started attacking, Latoya started attacking, and Chelsia (started attacking). We're the type of team that, we have to crash the boards offensively and defensively, and we were not doing that early on."

On the play of [Amber Holt](#) and her teammates

"When you've got a show horse you'd better show her, and so that's what we did tonight. We went to Amber, but Amber's got some teammates. [LSU] couldn't come off and give help, either. A lot of that was because they were trying to contain her one-on-one, and you can't do that. You're going to have to give help somewhere, and when you give help off [Brandi Brown](#) she's going to knock down a three. If you give help off Johnna [Abney] she's going to knock down a three. If you give help off Starr [Orr] she's going to slash on you. Amber's good at finding that person. They were trying to contain her one-on-one and you can't do that. You can't stop [Amber Holt](#) with one person."

On fan support

"We've got some of the most loyal fans in the country, and I'm not talking about women's basketball, I'm talking about Middle

Tennessee State University. They come to every big event we have here, if it's volleyball, football, you name it, our fans are here. We've talked about, 'Let's go out and reward these people, let's give them something to talk about tonight and cheer about'. These young ladies did that. More than anything we were playing for the fans tonight."

Middle Tennessee senior forward [Amber Holt](#)

"I just came out focused. I had to lead the team because whatever I do they gravitate toward that. I just stepped up and made baskets."

Feelings toward not playing against LSU senior center Sylvia Fowles

"I really wanted her to play because either way it goes, we were going to come out and play hard anyway."

How much did big games on the road prepare the team

"It prepared us. It made our freshmen step up and helped them not be scared. They showed that they were not scared tonight. Emily [Queen] came out and got 12 rebounds. She needs to do that more often because if she would, then we would win out. Starr [Orr] came out and played hard. "

Feelings on coming within a point of the school record for most points in a game

"If only I had made that free throw. It was good to come out and be one of the top since 1988. It doesn't matter."

Middle Tennessee senior guard [Starr Orr](#)

"Coach [Insell] has been telling me all year that I need to come out, step up, and take it to the basket and be a player. That's what I started to do. "

Difference the home crowd made

"Our crowd is very supportive of us and we just came out and played hard for them."

On senior forward [Amber Holt](#)

"When she is scoring we are going to get her the ball. When they start doubling on her she is going to get it to the open people. Like Coach [Insell] said, you can't stop her one on one."

LSU head coach Van Chancellor

Opening statement

"I want to compliment Middle Tennessee for their gameplan. They had a heck of a gameplan and they did a great job. It was a nice win for them. [Amber] Holt is a real player. She does a lot of difficult things. She creates a tough matchup for us. I didn't realize Holt was that good of a free throw shooter. I thought that [Emily] Queen did a good job getting 12 rebounds."

On Sylvia Fowles missing in action

"She had nothing to do with our losing today."

On if Sylvia Fowles would have made a difference

"It's not going to make a difference whether Sylvia [Fowles] is here or not here. If we don't change our attitude toward shooting the basketball, then it's not going to make a difference whether she is here or not."

On the offensive play of LSU

"What we like to specialize at LSU is to see how many passes we like to make. We don't have enough people to get the ball and look at the basket. I would just like to see more shooting."

On guarding [Amber Holt](#)

"We made up our mind that we were going to give up some points to Holt, but we hoped to eliminate their 3-point shooting. We didn't realize that we were going to give Holt so many points."

On more people shooting the ball

"It's not going to happen at LSU. It's not going to happen at LSU until I get my recruits in here. This team is not going to do it. They are the sweetest kids I have ever been around and they are all wonderful people. It's just not going to happen at LSU, not in my lifetime. Since I arrived there April 11th, I've tried to change their mindset. I can't change their mindset. I thought when Sylvia [Fowles] got hurt that it might be a blessing in disguise. I thought that was going to make us great at the end of the year. It was going to open up some people's mindsets and confidence that they want to shoot the ball. It's not going to happen."

On if LSU will return to Murfreesboro

I doubt it very seriously. It has nothing to do with Coach Rick Insell. I like a really a lot of people here. I like coming here. I like everything about Middle Tennessee. Rick [Insell] and I went out to dinner last night and he's a great guy. I respect what he has done. I respect what Middle Tennessee is doing to draw this many people at a game. I might rethink my position tomorrow. The only reason I would ever come back here is my respect for this team, this town, the fans and the coach."

On why LSU won't return to Murfreesboro

"I am not answering that because I'm not getting reprimanded. All you have to do is to pick up the stat sheet. It doesn't take a freaking genius to figure that out. What beat us was we couldn't make a freaking layup."

LSU senior guard Quianna Chaney

On [Amber Holt](#) scoring 41 points for Middle Tennessee

"Like Coach said, we knew we were going to give up some points to her and shut down their 3-point game. She was able to get a little more than what we thought she was going to get."

On how to regroup after the loss

"We need to go out there and take example of what could happen down the road. We need to go to practice and take advantage of what we have."

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