

Balanced scoring powers Blue Raiders past UNO, 80-61

Four players score in double figures in 34th consecutive home conference victory

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Middle Tennessee put together a 19-4 run over a six-minute stretch, the last three minutes of the first half and the first three of the second period, and never looked back in defeating New Orleans, 80-61, Sunday afternoon at Murphy Center. It was the 34th consecutive home victory over Sun Belt competition for the Blue Raiders dating to 2005. Amber Holt led four double-figure scorers for Middle Tennessee with 24 points and seven rebounds as well as four assists. Anne Marie Lanning hit four 3-pointers and scored 13 points, while Starr Orr added 14 points and five boards and Chelsia Lymon netted 12 points with a career-high six rebounds. Lymon also had three steals and three assists in her third consecutive start. Middle Tennessee built a 12-point lead in the first half but UNO cut the deficit to four



with 2:47 left before intermission. Lanning then hit a pair of 3-pointers and Holt added two free throws and a basket before the break for a 42-30 advantage. All four double-figure scorers had points in the opening minutes of the second half, buckets from Orr and Holt, two free throws by Lymon and a 3-pointer from Lanning capped the 19-4 run to give Middle Tennessee a 19-point advantage. The Blue Raiders would push the lead to as many as 27 late in the contest, and UNO never got closer than 17 the rest of the way. All eight Middle Tennessee players scored points and played at least 12 minutes. The Blue Raiders turned 21 Privateer turnovers into 26 points and won

the battle of the boards for the second straight game, 40-37, thanks to a team-best eight boards from Emily Queen. Holt was just 8-of-18 from the field but made 8-for-10 at the foul line. Orr had all five of her rebounds on the offensive glass and Lanning was 4-of-9 from 3-point range, giving the freshman nine trifectas in the last two games. UNO played well in spurts in the opening 20 minutes and never let the Raiders run away with the game. The Privateers shot 13-of-22 from the field and continually cut into the Middle Tennessee lead. The Blue Raiders led 27-16 with 7:07 remaining in the half before UNO put together a 12-5 run over the next four plus minutes, cutting the deficit to four. Middle Tennessee then closed the half with its 10-2 run for the 12-point halftime edge. Middle Tennessee plays at Louisiana-Monroe Thursday at 5:30 p.m. before returning home next Saturday against North Texas at 7 p.m. **POSTGAME NOTES**

HOLT MOVES UP SCORING LIST: Senior Amber Holt scored 24 points in the victory, giving her 1,073 career points. Holt passed Jessica Beaty (1,056 points, 1994-97) and Carlita Elder (1,065 points, 1996-99) for 18th place on the career scoring list. It was Holt's 15th 20-plus point game of the season and her 25th over her two seasons as a Blue Raider. Holt needs 18 points to pass Joanne Aluka (1,090 points, 1998, 2000-02) to 17th place on the all-time list. **LANNING HOT FROM THREE:** Freshman Anne Marie Lanning has become Middle Tennessee's most consistent 3-point shooter and continued that trend in Sunday's victory. Lanning hit 4-of-9 from behind the arc and scored 13 points, second straight double-figure outing and fourth in the last five games. Lanning has hit 9-of-18 from 3-point range over the last two contests and made 10-of-21 (.476) in three outings this week. The Murfreesboro, Tenn., native is shooting a team-best 45 percent (30-for-67) this season from 3-point range. **ORR COMES ALIVE:** Senior Starr Orr tied her career-high with 14 points in the victory, hitting 6-for-13 from the field. She also grabbed five rebounds and posted two assists and three steals as well. It was just her third double-figure scoring game of the season and first netting 12 at No. 1/1 Tennessee on December 13, a stretch of 11 games. The Danville, Ala., native tied her career-high with six field goals made and set a new career-best with 13 field goal attempts. Orr is averaging 6.5 points and 5.0 rebounds versus Sun Belt competition and has averaged 9.5 points over the last four contests. **HOME WIN STREAK CONTINUES:** Middle Tennessee posted its 34th straight home victory over Sun Belt competition with Sunday's 80-61 triumph over New Orleans. The last time Middle Tennessee dropped a conference home game was February 5, 2004, in double overtime against Western Kentucky. Overall, the Blue Raiders have won 38 of their last 39 home conference games dating to January 25, 2003, and head coach Rick Insell is a perfect 22-0 at the Glass House against SBC competition. In fact, since joining the Sun Belt before the 2000-01 season, the Blue Raiders are 52-7 at home against Sun Belt competition, an exquisite .881 winning percentage. **TIDBITS:** Middle Tennessee improved to 9-1 all-time against New Orleans, including seven consecutive victories, and upped its mark to 4-0 at home versus the Privateers ... Chelsia Lymon tied her career-high with 26 minutes played and set a career-high with six rebounds. Lymon netted 12 points, her seventh double-figure game this season and the fourth in the last six contests ... Jackie Pickel tied her career-high with three rebounds. **POSTGAME QUOTES**

Middle Tennessee head coach Rick Insell

On teams' performance

"I've said all along that we're getting better. It's not like the sun; we're doing it a little at a time. Sometimes you really don't see it and one day you see that you're taking care of the basketball. We're inching along and I think I'm beginning to see that. I think Angelique [Burtts] had a good game. She had four points and three rebounds but she was in position, she was in sync. She altered some shots which doesn't show up on the stat sheet. Even though she didn't get a lot of rebounds and a lot of points, she had a good game as far as I'm concerned as a coach. Emily [Queen] had a good game. She got those two early fouls and I didn't want to chance it but she goes to the boards, she

did a good job. Our other players did what they usually do. Anne Marie [Lanning] had a good game. Starr [Orr] had a good game. I thought Chelsia [Lymon] had a good game and knocked down some shots for us. [Amber] Holt is Holt." **On Brandi Brown's condition**

"We would like to have her today. She'll be back whenever Dr. Johns and his staff say that she can come back. We are hoping for her to be back for Louisiana-Monroe, if not North Texas, and if not North Texas then by Louisiana-Lafayette. We are looking at it. She's shooting the ball now and looking good. Nobody wants to be back more than she does I promise you. She's hungry to be back on the court and we want her back on the court. I think all our girls on the team will tell you that."

Senior forward Amber Holt

On only having 8 players

"Having eight players makes us even stronger like if we had five players. All it takes is five players to win a game. With eight we just have to come out and play with our hearts and defend and rebound like we did today." **On balanced scoring today**

"When Starr comes out like she did, Chelsia keeps running the team like she did today and everyone else keeps scoring, then I think we will be unstoppable."

Sophomore guard Chelsia Lymon

On New Orleans

"They are a tough team. They are the type of team that if we didn't come out and play like we played, it would have been a closer game. New Orleans is a very good team. They're tough, they're athletic and they attack. Everyone knew coming in that we had to put them away early so that later in the game it wouldn't be a tough one." **On playing with eight players**

"We knew coming in and after the Arkansas State game that we were going to have a big obstacle at hand and that was dealing with adversity. We looked at the situation at hand and rather than sitting around and making excuses, we tried to come together as a team and depend on each other instead of the individual. I think this obstacle is making us stronger as a team. We know we have to work harder in everything and every possession on the court because we only have eight players." **New Orleans Coach Amy Champion**

On gaining some late momentum against Middle Tennessee

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"We went on that little four-minute run toward the end of the first half. When our team executed, we can be very good. When we go away from our execution, that's when we struggle. Those are the lessons we are learning as a basketball team. We have a young point guard who is a sophomore. She's learning that when we don't execute, mistakes tend to happen. I would have to say that's kind of where our basketball team is at this point. We are learning that execution has got to be the bottom line to win the basketball game." **On committing 21 turnovers**

"When you are pressed for 40 minutes, you anticipate to turn the ball over a little bit. The full court pressure didn't bother us as much as the half court pressure did. Our decision making wasn't the greatest once we got past the half court line." **On shooting better percentage-wise than Middle Tennessee**

Tennessee

"I was really happy with that. I thought the shot selection was good. We did miss a few here and there. Again, against full court pressure it tends to rush you a little bit. We didn't get all the shots we wanted, but the ones we did get I was happy." **On three players scoring in double figures**

"For this program that is something that is very new. We have been building and building. We finally have some good players in that can now put points on the board. Having three players scoring double figures against Middle Tennessee is good for us."

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