Holt posts school-record 44 points in 3-point win

Senior breaks Kim Webb's 21-year-old mark

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MONROE, La. - Amber Holt scored a school-record 44 points and Starr Orr hit two big free throws with 3.5 seconds remaining, as Middle Tennessee escaped with a 64-61 victory over Louisiana-Monroe Thursday evening at Fant-Ewing Arena. The game had five ties and three lead changes and included one major mistake by ULM in the final 10 seconds. Holt banked in a 12-footer just before the halftime buzzer to tie the game at 27 at the break, even though Middle Tennessee made only 9-of-23 from the field and played poorly overall. The Blue Raiders then scored nine of the first 12 points of the second half, but ULM would not go away, battling back to take a one-point lead, 41-40, with 11:07 remaining. Middle Tennessee retook the lead with two free throws by Orr, but the two teams battled back-and-forth for the remainder of the contest, though the Blue Raiders never trailed. Holt hit a short turnaround jumper in the lane and four foul shots for a 48-43 lead with 7:56 to play. Orr's move in the lane gave Middle Tennessee a 54-48 advantage with 4:21 left, but Regena Jackson and LeJeanna Howard both hit 3-pointers for the Warhawks, with Howard's trifecta making it 58-56 Blue Raiders with 2:45 remaining. Lottie Moore missed a chance to tie the game for ULM with 2:06 remaining, missing the second of two foul shots. Holt answered with a spin move and a bucket on the other end, tying the school record for points. Moore made 1-of-2 again the next time down the floor and after

Holt's missed fadeaway baseline jumper, Jackson tied the game at 60 with 50.6 seconds left, knocking down two foul shots. The Blue Raiders went back to their bread-and-butter, feeding Holt on the baseline where she banked in a one-handed jumper from four feet with 31.6 seconds left. The Warhawks scrambled on the other end and Howard ended up with the ball driving to the basket. Holt was called for a block, sending the ULM senior to the foul line with the chance to tie. Howard hit the first free throw but while the second one was in the air, she crossed the foul line, negating what would have been the tying points. ULM fouled Orr with 3.5 seconds left and the Middle Tennessee senior knocked down both foul shots, going 6-for-6 from the charity stripe and scoring all 12 of her points after halftime. Jackson's decent look at the 3-pointer at the buzzer missed the rim all-together, and the Blue Raiders ran out of the gym with their third straight win. The Blue Raiders struggled mightily from the field in the opening half and would have been trailing by at least double-digits if not for Holt. Middle Tennessee started 3-for-12 from the floor and trailed by as many as 10 points, but Holt's offensive play and making free throws kept the visitors in the game. Holt scored 22 of the team's 27 points in the half, going 8-of-12 from the field and 6-for-8 at the foul line. Jackie Pickel made a 3-pointer and Chelsia Lymon had two free throws for the rest of the Blue Raider scoring. ULM started very hot from the field, making seven of their first 10 shots and hitting 13-for-22 in the half. But the Middle Tennessee defense turned up the pressure late in the half. ULM committed 12 turnovers, including one in the final seconds. Orr got a steal that ended up in Holt's hands in the final 10 seconds. The senior took a 15-footer that was short, but the carom ricocheted back to her and she banked in a jumper just before the buzzer, tying the game at 27 at halftime. Holt said after the game that the win was much more important than the points, though she was glad to get both. "We really didn't come out and play well in the first half and I didn't really feel all that good in the game, but coach always says I'm the first option and I have to play that way," Holt said. "The points are great and I'm happy to set the record, but it's much more important to get the win and we did that tonight." Holt was 17-for-25 at the foul line and 10-of-13 at the foul line. The 17 field goals tied a career-high and ties for the fourth most in a game in school history. She broke a 21-year-old scoring record previously held by Kim Webb (42 points versus Eastern Kentucky, 02/21/87). Middle Tennessee returns home Saturday, facing North Texas at 7 p.m. at Murphy Center. **VOLLEYBALL TEAM HONORED SATURDAY:** Middle Tennessee's record-setting volleyball team, the first Blue Raider team to advance to the NCAA Sweet Sixteen, will be honored at halftime of Saturday's game versus North Texas. The volleyball team won the Sun Belt regular season and tournament championships before posting NCAA victories over Louisville and Hawaii in the NCAA Tournament. The squad posted a 35-3 record and finished the year ranked 15th in the country. President Sidney McPhee and First Lady Liz McPhee are holding a reception for the volleyball team and all former Middle Tennessee female athletes (from all sports) from 5-6:30 p.m. at the Emmett and Rose Kennon Hall of Fame prior to the game. **POSTGAME NOTES**

HOLT PASSES WEBB'S RECORD: Amber Holt broke a 21-year-old record with a school-record 44 points in the game, hitting 17-of-25 shots from the field and 10-of-13 at the foul line. She scored 22 points in both halves, tying her career-high for points in a half. She passed her previous career-high of 41 points set December 28 of this season versus LSU. It was just the fifth 40-point game in school history. Before this season no player had scored more than 40 points since Tawanya Mucker on December 2, 1988. Holt's 17 field goals tied a career-high and tied for the fourth most field goals in a single game in school history. **MORE ON HOLT:** The senior was 10-of-13 from the foul line, her fifth game this season with double-digit free throws made in a game and the third time in the last five contests. Holt was also 17-for-25 from the field, the 10th time she has made double-figure field goals in a game in 2007-08 and the seventh time in the last 11 outings. Holt's 44 points ties for the second most this season by any player in the country. Oklahoma State's Andrea Riley scored 45 versus

Oklahoma on January 12 and Lamar's Tamara Abalde netted 44 against Wiley on November 24. Holt is the only player in the nation with more then 40 points in two games in 2007-08. **HOLT MOVES UP SCORING LISTS:** Amber Holt scored a school-record 44 points in the victory, passing Joanne Aluka (1,090 points, 1998, 2000-02) for 17th place on the all-time scoring list. She needs 65 points to pass Holly Hoover (1,181 points, 1982-84) for 16th place. Holt also moved passed five players on the single-season scoring list, moving past Patrice Holmes (512 - 2003, 513 - 2005), Jamie Thomatis (527 - 2001), Kim Webb (543 - 1985) and Holly Hoover (546 - 1983). Holt's 550 points this season ties Webb (1986) for 12th on the single-season list. With 34 more points, she can surpass Webb, Sharon McClanahan (563 - 1979), her mark from last season (567), Robin Hendrix (571 - 1981), Priscilla Robinson (573 - 1992) and Sherry Tucker (583 - 1995) for seventh place on the single-season charts. **RAIDERS KEEP WINNING ON THE ROAD:** Middle Tennessee improved to 6-7 on the road this season and 3-2 in Sun Belt play away from Murphy Center. The Blue Raiders are 19-8 overall on the road over the last two seasons and 13-2 in SBC action. **ORR HAS SECOND STRAIGHT BIG SCORING OUTING:** Senior Starr Orr posted her second straight double-digit outing, scoring 12 points, all in the second half, hitting all three shots from the field and making all six free throw attempts. Orr's two foul shots with 3.5 seconds remaining sealed the victory for the Blue Raiders. She also added five more rebounds in the victory and is averaging 7.1 points and 5.0 rebounds per game in Sun Belt action. She has scored 10.0 points per game over the last five outings. **TIDBITS:** Middle Tennessee improved to 3-0 all-time against Louisiana-Monroe, including 2-0 on the road in the series ... Middle Tennessee took a season-low 50 shots in the game and also a season-low nine 3-point attempts. The previous low for trifectas this season was 16 in two games, last at Western Kentucky on January 3 ... Chelsia Lymon played a career-high 37 minutes. Her previous high was 26 minutes on two different occasions ... Jackie Pickel tied her career-highs with two assists and two steals ... Starr Orr tied her career-high for free throws made (6) and free throw attempts (6). **POSTGAME QUOTES**

Middle Tennessee forward Amber Holt

On scoring a career-high 44 points

"When we first came out, we looked scared. It was making me mad that I had to put my teammates on my back. My teammates stepped up in the second half. I put the team on my back in the first half." **On the play of Louisiana-Monroe's defense**

"Some of their defense was good. They came out defending hard. We just had to come out and play with our fundamentals. That's how we came away with a win tonight." **On practice preparation helping the team in the second half**

"That helped us out some. We got a taste of whatever we practiced on the floor. That's what we did in the second half." **On the play of Starr Orr in the second half**

"I was chewing Starr [Orr] out at halftime because she was playing like she was scared. She came out and produced and helped us in the second half." **Middle Tennessee head coach Rick Insell**

On the win against Louisiana-Monroe

"I have little emotion left right now. What a great effort by all eight of our players. We did some things that helped us win the basketball game. We deflected passes and picked up rebounds. Emily Queen battled in there all night long. Angelique [Burtts] came in and battled. We had a couple of breakdowns defensively, but we gave everything we had." **On the play of Amber Holt**

"We are going to bring her back and saddle her back up Saturday. When Amber [Holt] needs to carry the load, she will. When you are in a one-point game with six minutes to go, who do you go to? We are going to Holt. Everybody in the country knows that. She made some Michael Jordan shots tonight." **On Amber Holt scoring a school-record 44 points**

"Kim Webb is one of the greatest players in Middle Tennessee State University history. She was not

out there trying to break Kim Webb's record. She was trying to beat Louisiana-Monroe. I coached against Kim [Webb] and she is one of the greatest players in all of high school basketball. Diane Turnham is the one who recruited her in there. I would like to have a team full of Kim Webb's, but we don't. We have Amber Holt and seven other ladies to go around her. We are going to keep playing as hard as we can." **On missing some easy shots early**
"We missed about five two-footers. Emily [Queen] and Anne Marie [Lanning] missed a couple of easy shots. Those are shots that we usually make. Louisiana-Monroe is very athletic and they were coming at us hard. They were like us because they were looking to take the charge. I am very proud of our young ladies." **On the play of Louisiana-Monroe**
"They had several [people] guarding Amber [Holt]. They are a very athletic and well-coached them. We may very well have to play them again. They are going to make some noise. That's another team on this [East] side of the conference that we needed to beat and so we got another win over here. We should not have let the Arkansas State game slip away, but we can't do anything about that. We took care of Monroe tonight and that's what I am pleased with."

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