Lymon leads Blue Raiders again at UL

Blue Raiders hit 14 3-pointers in 85-66 victory

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LAFAYETTE, La. - Chelsia Lymon posted a career-high for the second straight game, netting 27 points, and Amber Holt added 19, as Middle Tennessee defeated Louisiana-Lafayette, 85-66, Wednesday night at Earl K. Long Gym for the Blue Raiders fifth straight victory and the team's seventh victory in the last eight games. Middle Tennessee (14-8, 9-2) started the game very slowly in the opening minutes but came alive after a Lymon steal and basket with 13:26 left in the first half. She hit a 3-pointer the next trip up the floor and the Raiders were off to the races, part of a 25-7 run in the middle of the opening half that put the visitors up double-digits. Middle Tennessee led by 13 at halftime and stretched the lead to as many as 25 late in the second half. The Blue Raiders hit a team season-high 14 3-pointers, as the Ragin' Cajuns double-teamed Holt on the block and allowed shooters wide-open looks. Middle Tennessee was 14-of-43 from 3-point range in the game, season-highs in both categories, with Lymon accounting for five of the trifectas. Anne Marie Lanning hit three more of the 3-pointers and accounted for 14 points for the Blue Raiders. Middle Tennessee forced 25 UL turnovers and turned those into 40 points. After starting off very slowly and trailing 10-2 three-plus minutes into the game, the Blue Raiders found the range from the outside and also on the defensive end, putting together a 25-7 run over the next nine minutes. Lymon scored seven points during the stretch, as did Holt, and the Ragin' Cajuns committed eight turnovers that led to 19 Middle Tennessee points. Brandi Brown, making her return to the lineup for the first time since December 30, hit a 3-pointer in the final minute of the half, one of seven trifectas for the Blue Raiders before the

break. Lymon got a steal on UL's next trip up the floor and Starr Orr had one last look before the horn, but her 18-footer was a little short. Even still, the Raiders took a 37-24 lead to intermission. Lymon ended the half with 12 points and Holt netted eight. Eight of the nine players on the squad scored in the first 20 minutes. UL had 13 turnovers at the break in part because of Middle Tennessee's nine steals. Holt and Lymon combined for the first 11 points of the second half and UL managed just three free throws in the first four minutes, giving the Blue Raiders a 48-27 advantage. The Cajuns answered with a 15-7 run over the next four minutes, including 3-pointers from Bronson Rodgers and Jasmine Barnes. But Middle Tennessee answered with its own 15-6 run, highlighted by trifectas from Latoya Barclay and Lymon for a 70-50 Blue Raider advantage with 7:27 remaining. Holt had a team-high eight rebounds, four assists and six steals, contributing in other phases. Middle Tennessee next plays on Wednesday, February 6, hosting UALR at Murphy Center at 7 p.m.

POSTGAME NOTES

LYMON HAS ANOTHER BIG NIGHT: Sophomore Chelsia Lymon had her second straight big night of scoring, netting a career-high for the second straight game with 27 points. Lymon hit 8-of-17 shots from the field, including 5-for-12 from 3-point range. She was 6-of-6 at the foul line and added four assists and a career-high six steals. Lymon set career-highs for field goal attempts, 3-point field goals and 3-point attempts. It was her ninth double-figure scoring game of the season and the sixth in the last nine contests. **LAUNCHING FROM BEHIND THE ARC:** Middle Tennessee 14-for-43 from 3-point range in the contest, setting team season-highs for makes and attempts. It is the eighth time this season the Blue Raiders have made double-digit 3-pointers in a game and the 24th time in head coach Rick Insell's two-plus year tenure. The 14 made 3-pointers was the most since hitting 16 versus North Dakota State on January 2, 2007, and the 43 attempts are the most attempts since taking 48 versus UL on January 28, 2007. Chelsia Lymon made five of the 3-pointers in the game, the third Blue Raiders to hit at least five this season. Anne Marie Lanning hit five at Troy on January 17 and Brandi Brown had six at Maryland on December 5. It is the eighth time in the last three seasons a Blue Raider had made five or more 3-pointers in a contest - Brandi Brown made seven and Jackie Pickel hit six versus North Dakota State last season; Johnna Abney made six versus Troy (01/21/06) and five versus Utah (03/18/06) and New Orleans (01/28/06); and Chrissy Givens hit five against Florida International (02/02/06). Lymon's 12 3-point attempts also tied Brown (vs. Maryland) for the most by an individual this season for the Blue Raiders. **HOLT JOINS IN THE BARRAGE:** Senior Amber Holt tied her career-high with three 3-pointers in the victory, going 3-for-5 from behind the arc. She also made a trio of trifectas versus South Alabama on February 3, 2006. Holt had made two 3-pointers on three occasions this season. **RAIDERS HIT THE BOARDS:** Middle Tennessee was outrebounded in the contest, 46-42, overall but the 42 rebounds was a team season-high, one more than the previous best of 41 set in the season-opener at Old Dominion. Amber Holt had a team-high eight rebounds in the game, but all nine players had at least two rebounds and Jackie Pickel pulled down a career-high four boards. Emily Queen also added six caroms and Starr Orr had five. **TURNOVERS ARE ABUNDANT:** During Middle Tennessee's current five-game winning streak, the Blue Raiders have forced a total of 120 turnovers (24.0 per game). Middle Tennessee has turned those miscues into 160 total points, or 32.0 per outing. The Blue Raiders forced Louisiana-Lafayette into 25 turnovers and turned those into 40 points. **BROWN MAKES HER RETURN:** Sophomore Brandi Brown returned to the court after a month's absence, making both of her shot attempts and grabbing three rebounds in 14 minutes of action. Brown last played at Louisville on December 30 before breaking her hand in practice the next day. She missed eight games total, with the Blue Raiders compiling a 6-2 mark during her absence. **TIDBITS:** Middle Tennessee improved to 13-0 all-time against Louisiana-Lafayette, including 4-0 on the road in the series at 3-0 at Earl K. Long Gym ... The Blue Raiders have won five straight overall and seven of

their last eight. The five-game winning streak is the longest of the season ... Middle Tennessee took a team season-high 78 shots in the contest ... Anne Marie Lanning set career-highs for field goal attempts (13) and 3-point attempts (10). **POSTGAME QUOTES**

Middle Tennessee guard Chelsia Lymon

On players stepping up to win the game

"We are now in the stretch run. Everybody has to step up and improve their game. In the pre-season we have been struggling. In the last two games Coach [Insell] had us to meet up to his goals and we had to make those goals." **On shooting with confidence**

"In the conference, you have to shoot with confidence and knock shots down. Toward the end of the season, a lot of the teams are starting to pick up on our game plan. The only way we can execute that game plan effectively is by knocking shots down." **On UL's intense defending of Amber Holt**

"That's what their game plan was. They wanted to lure us down to the post and then guard her with all five players or whatever it took. The key to the game was to knock down shots." **On the fast pace of the game**

"This game was one of those where every possession counted. It was a fast-paced game and every possession was a big one." **On having a few days off before their next game**

"That's what we have been looking for. We haven't had a couple of days off in a while. We'll all go to the training room to get rid of the aches and bruises and then prepare for next week's game. We are looking forward to that." **Middle Tennessee head coach Rick Insell**

On UL's late scoring flurry "We didn't do a good job until we got into our hard press. We got into our hard press and that caused them problems and caused them to speed up their game. We were in a flex and they were flashing and breaking us down with the dribble. When you do that, it really causes us some problems." **On missing a few 3-point shots**

"We probably should have hit about 20 tonight. We had some good looks at the three balls tonight. Annie Marie had two early wide open looks and Latoya Barclay had a couple of open looks and didn't knock them down. Angelique took a shot one time when Brandi had a shot wide open." **On UL's late comeback after having a big lead**

"We made mistakes that we usually don't make. When you get in the game and see that you are up 20 points, you have the mentality that you want to score instead of staying in our system, which is our game plan. We got to playing scoreboard watching and that's what got them back into the game. I am glad to get out of here. I expected any minute that Jimmy Chitwood would jump out of one of those 15 closets I am looking at and shoot a 3-pointer." **On the play of Brandi Brown**

"Brandi [Brown] did a good job. I wanted her to take more shots than she took and she was 2-for-2 tonight. When she shoots 10 times, she is going to hit eight. We have to beg, plead and bargain for her to shoot." **On if Brown's injured hand hampered her during the game**

"I think one time on a rebound it did because she wasn't able to grasp it and she fumbled it out. That's the way we are going to play Brandi until she gets that cast off." **On the overall play of the team**

"Amber [Holt] missed four wide open lay ups. We didn't do a very good job. Let's take the win and get them back on the plane and get them back to classes in the morning." **On having much needed rest**

"Our kids need a rest. You can tell they were tired. They need to catch up on some academics. We need to get them back in class and get them caught up and ahead of schedule."