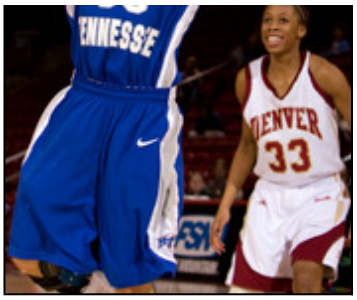
Holt's 32 leads Blue Raiders at DU

Senior posts ninth 30-point game of season, sixth double-double

February 21, 2008 · MT Media Relations

DENVER, Colo. - Amber Holt posted her sixth double-double of the season with 32 points and 11 rebounds and Middle Tennessee used a 28-4 run in the first half to build a big lead and never looked back, defeating Denver, 81-77, Thursday night at Magness Arena. It was the first double-double for Holt since January 17 at Troy and her ninth 30-point game of the year. She scored 18 points in the first half, including eight during the 28-4 run, and the Blue Raiders (17-10, 12-4 Sun Belt) knocked down nine 3-pointers in the game by five different people to post their ninth straight victory over Denver in the series. After leading by 16-18 points for most of the second half, the Pioneers rallied frantically in the final minutes, cutting the deficit to two in the final minute before Holt made four straight free throws to seal the victory. The Blue Raiders made only 7-of-12 foul shots in the final minutes, allowing the home team to get back in the game. Denver shot 69 percent in the second half from the field, making 20-of-29 shots, including six 3-pointers, storming back in the final five minutes before falling just short. Anne Marie Lanning scored 13 points and Jackie Pickel came off the bench to hit three 3-pointers and net 11 for Middle Tennessee.

"This was a tough win but we did what we needed to do," head coach Rick Insell said. "We started a little slow but then we picked it up, knocking down some shots and picking up our defense and that was a big factor. This is a tough road trip and we got the first one and that's what counts." Sara Benham led four Pioneers (10-16, 5-10) in double figures with 18, including the 1,000th-point of her career. Alisha



Godette scored 14 points, all in the second half, while Nnenna Akotaobi and Andie Mason both posted 12 points. After making just two of their first 10 shots in the game, the Blue Raiders hit 10 of the next 12 from the field, outscoring the Pioneers, 28-4, over a seven-minute stretch. Middle Tennessee hit five 3-pointers during the stretch, all from different players, and Holt scored eight points, including a pair of old-fashioned 3-point plays. The Raiders shot 49 percent in the half after their miserable start and Holt netted 18 points. Six of the eight players on the squad scored and the Blue Raiders committed just four turnovers. The defense also forced Denver into 13 miscues, resulting in 16 Middle Tennessee points. The Blue Raiders head to Boca Raton to take on Florida Atlantic Saturday at 4 p.m. CT before hosting Troy on Saturday, March 1, at 3 p.m. on Senior Day.

ALUMNI BREAKFAST SET FOR SBC CHAMPIONSHIPS: The Middle Tennessee Alumni Association invites everyone to attend a complimentary champagne breakfast at the Sun Belt Championships on Sunday, March 9, from 10 a.m. to noon. The breakfast will take place at the U.S.S. Alabama Battleship in Mobile. The event is prior to the noon tipoff for the SBC Tournament that day. Join other alumni and fans to visit with university officials and cheer on the Blue Raiders. The event is free for fans and alumni. RSVP requested by calling the MT Alumni Relations Office at 1-800-533-6878. Fans must purchase tickets for the basketball tournament and may do so by calling the MT Ticket Office at 1-888-YES-MTSU. For more details about the alumni breakfast, go to www.mtalumni.com. **POSTGAME NOTES**

HOLT POSTS SIXTH DOUBLE-DOUBLE: Amber Holt recorded her sixth double-double of the season, posting 32 points and 11 rebounds against Denver in 33 minutes of action. The senior was 12-for-20 from the field and 8-of-9 at the foul line, knocking down four straight free throws in the final seconds to seal the victory for the Blue Raiders. Holt collected 18 points and eight rebounds in the first half of the contest and had her best shooting night in the last seven games. It was her first game above 50 percent from the floor since making 17-for-25 at Louisiana-Monroe on January 24. The double-double is the ninth of Holt's career. It was also her ninth 30-plus point game in 2007-08, tying Tawanya Mucker (1988) for the most in one season. **PICKEL HAS BIG NIGHT:** Sophomore Jackie Pickel posted one of her best outings of the season, scoring 11 points in 14 minutes of action. Pickel hit three 3-pointers and tied season-highs for FG made (4), FG attempts (9) and 3-point attempts (7). She also tied her career-high with two assists. Pickel has hit 6-of-10 from 3-point range over the last three games after making only 3-for-16 in the previous three outings. **RAIDERS KEEP MAKING TRIFECTAS:** A big part of Middle Tennessee's offense continues to be the 3-pointers and the Blue Raiders have found quite a bit of consistency from behind the arc over the last seven games. Middle Tennessee is 65-for-197 (.330) from 3-point range over the seven outings, making at least eight trifectas in every contest. The Blue Raiders were 9-of-26 against Denver, making 35 percent as a team, including three 3-pointers from Jackie Pickel and a pair each from Anne Marie Lanning and Brandi Brown. **TIDBITS:** Middle Tennessee improved to 9-3 all-time against Denver, including nine consecutive victories over the Pioneers. It was the second win in four tries on the road in the series for the Blue Raiders ... Chelsia Lymon tied her career-high with five assists, the second game she has done that in the last five outings. **POSTGAME QUOTES**

Senior forward Amber Holt

On having a letdown in the second half

"Yeah it was because in the first half we were up by 20 and then in the second half we let our guard down and we won by four." **On making crucial free throws down the stretch**

"I had to step up. Free throws are what wins games and that is what I had to do." **On missing some free throws**

"We can't do anything about the ball rolling in and out, but we should have made it." **On the play of Denver**

"They did play hard. We just need to work on our defense. That's what killed us because we were loafing around defensively. We will get it back together." **Middle Tennessee head coach Rick Insell**

On the win

"I am glad to be through with this game. I felt like at halftime we could have been up by as many as 30 points. We missed a few chip shots and didn't take care of the basketball. We had 12 turnovers, but we threw the ball away several times from the point guard to the shooting guard. That's not characteristic for us. We didn't take care of the basketball like we should have. I am disappointed in the exchanges between Chelsia [Lymon] and Latoya [Barclay]. They played tough hard-nosed defense for us, but giving teams a chance to come back on unforced turnovers is not good." **On Denver surging back in the second half**

"Denver has a good team. They have defeated Louisiana-Monroe, Arkansas State and North Texas. They have a good team. At halftime, our kids knew we could have been up by 30 and in the second half they were playing to get out of here and go to Florida. Denver didn't have that in their mind. We had some big shots when we needed it. Down the stretch, you go back to your All-American and get her to drain shots for you and that's what we did. When you miss free throws you let people to get back into the game." **On switching zone defenses**

"They were switching up on us. The changing didn't bother us. Our turnovers hurt us. We broke our own momentum. I am sitting here crying about 12 turnovers, but we should have only had around eight. We were not taking care of the basketball." **On lack of defensive play in the second half**

"We played very poor post defense. I thought Emily [Queen] and Brandi [Brown] played very poor post defense. A lot of that can be attributed to the fact that we didn't pressure the ball outside like we should have. Denver was penetrating the ball inside and we had Amber Holt with four fouls. We aren't a very good basketball team when we play poor post defense." **On coming away with a win**

"Everything on this chart we needed tonight. We are thankful we got out of here with a win. I am happy that our players are healthy. I am happy that we won the ball game and I am happy that Denver didn't get anybody hurt either."

Printed on March 12, 2014
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/30241