

February 23, 2008

Blue Raiders work overtime for 89-84 victory

Latoya Barclay scores career-high 22 points in win

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BOCA RATON, Fla. - [Latoya Barclay](#)'s 3-pointer with 2.9 seconds remaining tied the contest and [Amber Holt](#) scored nine of her game-high 34 points in overtime, as the Blue Raiders erased a seven-point deficit in the final minutes and defeated Florida Atlantic, 89-84, at FAU Arena Saturday evening.

The Blue Raiders (18-10, 13-4) continued to battle despite being down almost the entire game and being in foul trouble. Barclay provided the biggest game of her career-high at the most opportune time, netting 11 of her career-best 22 in the final three minutes of regulation, including an old-fashioned 3-point play with 3:12 remaining, a 15-footer at 2:58 and then the tying 3-pointer from the wing in the final seconds.

On the play [Jackie Pickel](#) was fouled setting the pick for Barclay, but Pickel missed both free throws that would have secured the win in regulation.

Nonetheless, the Blue Raiders started quickly in overtime, with Holt scoring four straight times up the floor and FAU (6-19, 2-14) committing three turnovers on its end. Middle Tennessee outscored the Owls, 11-6, in the extra period, moving closer to a first-round bye in the upcoming Sun Belt Championships.

The game was back-and-forth in the second half until FAU scored seven straight points in the middle of the period to take the lead for good. Jaimie Givens had two buckets and Brittany Bowe hit two free throws for the Owls, as Middle Tennessee went without a bucket for almost five minutes at one point.

But Holt's bucket with 6:30 remaining in the regulation started a frantic pace down the stretch where the Blue Raiders scored 22 points over the final 6:30. Holt had six during the stretch, but the show belonged to the senior Barclay.

She hit a runner in the lane plus the foul with 3:12 left to cut the FAU lead to 70-65. She followed with a jumper 14 seconds later that cut the deficit to four. [Anne Marie Lanning](#) made one free throw on the next trip up the floor for the Blue Raiders before making a leaner in the lane with 1:37 left, making it 73-70 FAU.

The Owls left the door open for the visitors by failing to convert from the foul line, making only 11-of-23 in the second half. Bowe made one foul shot with 25.6 seconds left and two more with 12.3 seconds remaining, but Barclay's 3-pointer tied the contest and the Blue Raiders pulled out the victory in overtime.

"That's a play we work on everyday in practice, Latoya and Chelsia [Lymon] getting that 3-pointer and knocking it down and [Latoya] did just that," head coach Rick Insell said. "She has such amazing will-power and was not going to be denied. Every shot in the final minutes was in and we needed all of them."

Holt played all 45 minutes in the game and tied her career-high with 15 rebounds to go with her 34 points. Lanning added 14 for the Blue Raiders, who committed a season-high 22 turnovers but still survived.

Bowe led the Owls with 23 points, while Givens scored 19 and Carla Stubbs netted 15 for FAU.

Florida Atlantic started fast, hitting seven of its first 10 shots and racing out to a 14-9 advantage. FAU led 23-17 before the Blue Raiders put together a 13-2 run to take a five-point advantage with 4:06 remaining in the half.

But the Owls retook the lead in the final minutes, scoring 14 of the final 20 points of the half thanks to baskets from Bowe and Givens and a 3-pointer by Adel Lizama.

The teams combined for 27 free throws in the half after 23 fouls were whistled. Holt was 8-for-8 at the charity stripe and Barclay hit 5-of-7, as the Blue Raiders made 15-of-17 before intermission. But Middle Tennessee had 14 turnovers in the half, more than they've committed in all but one of the past 10 games.



Latoya Barclay scored a career-high 22 points, including 11 in the final three minutes of regulation, in Middle Tennessee's 89-84 overtime win at Florida Atlantic on Saturday. (Bradley Lambert)

Middle Tennessee hosts Troy Saturday, March 1, at 3 p.m. on Senior Day. [Amber Holt](#), [Starr Orr](#), [Latoya Barclay](#) and manager Allison Bradley will be honored before the game.

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

BARCLAY COMES UP BIG: Senior [Latoya Barclay](#) added a miraculous chapter to her career, scoring a career-high 22 points in the overtime victory, including 11 in the final three minutes of regulation. Barclay had an old-fashioned 3-point play with 3:10 to play in the game, then hit a 15-footer 13 seconds later. Her 3-pointer with a minute to play tied the game at 73 before her final heroics, another trifecta, this one from the wing, with 2.9 seconds left pushed the game into overtime. She added another bucket in the extra period. For the game Barclay was 7-for-9 from the field and 2-of-3 from 3-point range. She was also 6-for-8 at the foul line and tied her career-high with four rebounds. The Harvest, Ala., native also set career-highs for FG made and FT attempts and tied career-bests for FG attempts and FT made. It was just the third double-figure scoring game of the season for Barclay and the first since the first two contests of the year, at Old Dominion and versus Tennessee Tech.

DOUBLE DOSE FOR HOLT: For the second straight game and the seventh time this season, senior [Amber Holt](#) posted a double-double, scoring 34 points and tying her career-high with 15 rebounds. Holt set career-highs by going 16-for-22 at the foul line. She had seven offensive rebounds in her totals and was the only player on either team to play all 45 minutes in the overtime contest. The Duluth, Ga., native was 9-for-19 from the field and averaged 32.0 points and 13.0 rebounds in a pair of games last week after posting 30 points and 11 boards at Denver.

RAIDERS WIN BATTLE OF THE BOARDS: Middle Tennessee won the battle of the boards in the contest, 43-41, including 18 on the offensive glass for the Blue Raiders. It was a team season-high for rebounds and all eight players on the roster had at least one rebound, including [Amber Holt](#)'s 15 boards, which tied her season-high. It was also the most rebounds by the club since grabbing 44 versus Denver in the semifinals of the Sun Belt Championships in 2007. The Blue Raiders are 8-1 this season when outrebounding an opponent.

TIDBITS: Middle Tennessee improved to 5-0 all-time versus Florida Atlantic and 2-0 in Boca Raton. FAU led at halftime in both contests this season, only to watch the Blue Raiders prevail in the end ... Middle Tennessee set team season-highs for free throws (27) and free throw attempts (40) in the victory. The Blue Raiders are 53-for-73 (.726) from the foul line in two games versus Florida Atlantic this season ... Middle Tennessee committed a season-high 22 turnovers, only its second game this season with more than 20 miscues. The Blue Raiders had 21 turnovers in the season opener at Old Dominion.

POSTGAME QUOTES

Senior guard [Latoya Barclay](#)

On the last play in regulation

"In practice, we had been working on a new shot clock play. We threw it to the wing and I was coming off a double screen. In my head, I was thinking to myself that I needed to take my time and shoot. When I take my time, I hit my shots. I took my time and it went in."

On how many times she shoots during practice

"We shoot at least 20 or 30 shots after practice every day."

On [Amber Holt](#) electing to pass to her for the final play in regulation

"That means a lot. When an All-American gives you the ball, you have to put it in."

On [Jackie Pickel](#) missing two free throws at the end of regulation

"She was in tears because she missed that shot. I told her that there will be another time when she will have the opportunity to make that shot and win it for us."

On making some crucial free throws

"They were fouling. I was trying to drive to the lane. Point guards must knock down free throws and that's what I had to do. We had to regain ourselves on the free throw line."

Middle Tennessee head coach Rick Insell

On the win in overtime

"It was a good one. What a remarkable comeback the kids made. I was looking at the minutes played here. Everybody contributed to this win. If it wasn't a big rebound, it was taking a charge or it was knocking down big free throws at the end."

On nobody left on the bench

"I had enough. They are all special. I thought Brandi [Brown] really came out of her shell tonight. She had a couple of blocks and hit a three that helped us. Jackie [Pickel] did a good job defensively. She didn't get any points for us, but she did a good job. She had a chance at the end to win the game for us, but she couldn't come through. I really feel for her. She will get another opportunity."

On the play of [Latoya Barclay](#)

"Latoya [Barclay] and Chelsia [Lymon] are the ones who take the shot during our shot clock play in practice. [Latoya] looked at me and gave me a 'I know what I'm doing' look. She came off the stagger pick and buried the shot. That was a big time winner."

On players stepping up

"We work on it everyday. [Latoya] did what she was supposed to do. Our zone gave them problems for about four possessions in the overtime. They came out and got a quick hitter on us. We then switched to man-to-man and did a good job guarding them in that regard. They played hard. They might have won only two games in our conference, but they played hard."

On the game against Troy next week

"The one thing we talked about before this game is that we control our own destiny. Let's go out and win games. Troy has a good basketball team and is well-coached. Our conference has some great coaches. I hate to really hit on this. This conference needs a better women's TV package. As many good coaches as we have in this conference, this was a game today that should have been on TV. We have some great teams in this conference."

Printed on May 22, 2012

Original URL: <http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/30269>