

Seniors lead Raiders in final home game

Squad secured No. 3 seed in SBC Championships with 61-50 victory

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee used a 23-8 run over a 10-minute stretch in the second half en route to defeating Troy, 61-50, Saturday at Murphy Center on Senior Day for Blue Raiders Amber Holt, Latoya Barclay and Starr Orr. With the victory Middle Tennessee secured the No. 3 seed in the Sun Belt Championships and a bye in the first round. The Blue Raiders (19-10, 14-4 SBC) trailed 42-38 with 11:34 remaining in the game after



Troy's Brittne Davis hit a jumper in the lane. Troy (12-17, 5-13) did not score again for almost six minutes and had six turnovers, including three in a row at one point. Holt started the run with a layup, two of her game-high 23 points, including 16 in the second half. She scored 10 points during the 23-8 run and Barclay added six of her nine points in the stretch. Emily Queen had two of the biggest buckets during the run, grabbing offensive rebounds and converting those into putbacks on consecutive possessions. The Blue Raiders forced 30 turnovers in the contest and converted those into 37 points, which negated Troy's 57 percent shooting from the field. The Trojans hit 77 percent in the first half but turned the ball over 16 times. Middle Tennessee was just the opposite, making only 36 percent from the field and just 5-of-27 (19 percent) from 3-point range. Chelsia Lymon scored 10 points for the Blue Raiders, the only other double-figure scorer, but the sophomore was only 1-of-8 from behind the arc. Holt ended the contest with seven rebounds, five assists and four steals, while Orr also grabbed seven boards and Queen added five. Holt set the single-season scoring record during the contest and heads into the SBC Championships with 780 points this year. The Blue Raiders struggled to find an offensive rhythm in the first half, hitting only 10-of-31 shots from the field, including 5-for-16 from 3-point range. Troy was up 5-2 in the opening minutes before Middle Tennessee ran off 13-2 stretch, with three straight 3-pointers from Brandi Brown, Jackie Pickel and Barclay. But the squad would go 2-for-12 over the final 11-plus minutes of the half from behind the arc. The Trojans would battle back, putting together their own run of 16-7, including eight points from Kylie Morrissy. Her 15-footer with 3:18 left in the half put Troy ahead, 23-22. Holt answered with a pair of jumpers for the Blue Raiders before Lymon knocked down a 3-pointer with 56 seconds left to tie the contest at 29 heading to intermission. Troy was 13-of-17 from the field in the half but also committed 16 turnovers, which the Blue Raiders converted into 19 points. Middle Tennessee will

play the winner of the No. 6 vs. No. 11 contest in the quarterfinals of the SBC Championships at 9 p.m. on March 8 in Mobile, Ala. Troy will most likely be the No. 11 seed, but three teams - Louisiana-Monroe, South Alabama or Florida International - could host the game as the No. 6 seed on March 5.

5. POSTGAME NOTES

HOLT BREAKS SINGLE-SEASON SCORING RECORD: Senior Amber Holt scored 23 points versus Troy on March 1, breaking the single-season scoring record in the process and adding to her list of accolades this season. Holt broke the record of 768 points set last season by Chrissy Givens. Three of the top four single-season scoring marks have been set in the last three seasons. Holt's 567 points in 2006-07 ranks 11th on the single-season charts. Holt has 780 points this year heading into Saturday's quarterfinal contest in the Sun Belt Tournament and needs only 73 points to reach the Top 20 nationally for points in a season. **HOLT MOVES UP CAREER SCORING LIST:** Senior Amber Holt continues to climb the career scoring list at Middle Tennessee, reaching 14th place heading into the Sun Belt Tournament. Holt has 1,347 career points heading into Saturday's quarterfinal game in the SBC Tournament and needs just 2 points to move past Heather Prater (1,348 points, 1993-96) for 13th place and 5 points to surpass Tia Stovall (1,351 points, 2003-06) for 12th place on the all-time list. Sherry Tucker (1,452 points, 1992-95) ranks 11th on the career scoring list. **TURNOVERS AT A MINIMUM:** Middle Tennessee committed just 10 turnovers in the victory over Troy, continuing a recent trend of keeping turnovers to a minimum. The Blue Raiders have committed more than 14 turnovers just once in the last 11 games, registering 129 turnovers (11.7 per game) during the 11-game stretch. Middle Tennessee committed only eight turnovers versus UALR on Feb. 6 and nine against South Alabama on Feb. 14. The only hiccup during the last 11 games came at Florida Atlantic on Feb. 23 when the club committed a season-high 22 miscues. It was only the second 20-turnover game of the season and the first since the season-opener at Old Dominion. Middle Tennessee is averaging just 13.7 turnovers per game for the season, ranking 11th nationally. **TIDBITS:** Middle Tennessee owns a 7-0 all-time mark versus Troy, including 5-0 since the Trojans joined the Sun Belt three seasons ago. The Blue Raiders have won all four meetings in Murfreesboro by an average of 25.0 points and all seven contests by an average of 22.0 points ... Chelsia Lymon tied her career-high with eight free throw attempts. **POSTGAME QUOTES**

Head Coach Rick Insell

On the difference in the two halves

"The second half we played much better defense. The first half we didn't play that bad, [Troy] just knocked down shots. You've got to give them credit. In the second half we were able to get up in them more and control the tempo. Changing our press up hurt them a bit." **On the shift in**

momentum

"At halftime it was tied up and Troy had the momentum. We came back out and they scored first, and we had about four possessions in a row where we didn't score. The next thing you know Amber took over and got some buckets for us." **On the difference in the game**

"The big stat of the whole game was turnovers. [Troy] had 30 turnovers. You take those away and they probably win the game. But we caused them with our pressure." **Forward Amber Holt**

On being more aggressive late in the game

"The coaches told me I needed to go ahead and make my moves. I was just sitting there waiting for them to collapse. Once I started making my moves, everything started to come. The offense came eventually." **On playing her last home game as a Blue Raider**

"It was alright. We won, so that was a plus. I'm going to miss my girls. That's the main thing. We bonded so much this year." **Senior guard Latoya Barclay**

On hitting clutch shots

"I saw Anne Marie [Lanning] and Starr [Orr] going off the pick. [Coach Insell] told me to go off the

pick and I thought, 'Okay, I'm going to try to do something.' We had to get something else going because they were collapsing on [Amber] Holt." **On only losing once conference home game as a Blue Raider**

"That's a big accomplishment. I hadn't really realized that. It means a lot. It's a tradition we need to keep going." **Troy head coach Michael Murphy**

On today's game

"I thought we did a real good job for 30 minutes on Holt. She's so good she's one of those players that you can't stop her, you can only contain her. I thought we did a good job of that for the first 30 minutes, but then she kind of took over there at the end. I think we put out good effort and that's something we can build on for the tournament next week."

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