Raiders season ends in overtime

Squad falls at Kentucky in second round of WNIT

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LEXINGTON, Ky. - Brandi Brown hit a 3-pointer in the final seconds to send the game to overtime but Middle Tennessee scored just a pair of buckets in the extra period, as the Wildcats escaped with a 68-66 victory over the Blue Raiders in the second round of the WNIT Friday night at Memorial Coliseum. Kentucky (16-15) led the game almost the entire second half after a 9-0 run in the opening minutes, but the Blue Raiders continued to hang around despite shooting less than 30 percent most of the period. Brown hit a 3-pointer with 1:20 left before UK's Lydia Watkins missed a pair of free throws, her only mistakes of the second half. Amber Holt then scored two of her 32 points on a layup with 22.3 seconds remaining. After a timeout the Blue Raiders (22-12) forced a turnover on an inbounds pass by the Wildcats and took the ball under the Middle Tennessee goal. Holt got the inbounds and drove to the basket, kicking it out for Brown, who nailed it from the corner with a hand in her face. UK could not get off a shot until just before the final horn, a desperation heave by Victoria Dunlap that fell short. It capped a frantic comeback by the Blue Raiders, who were playing their second game in three days in the WNIT. In the overtime UK's Samantha Mahoney hit a driving layup 56 seconds into the extra period, and it was the only points for either team until Holt scored with 1:11 remaining. Watkins hit a turnaround jumper as the shot clock expired for the Wildcats before Holt scored again. Watkins missed the next time down the floor

and Holt got the ball in the final minute. Her defender fell down on the entry pass and it took her a split second to realize it. She took a 10-footer off the glass, but the ball rattled in and out and Chelsea Chowning made a breakaway layup for a four-point UK advantage. Holt nailed a 3-pointer on the next trip with 4.4 seconds remaining and Chowning made just 1-of-2 free throws, but the Blue Raiders were unable to get off a last desperation shot before the clock expired. Holt added six rebounds to go with her 32 points as well as three assists, while Chelsia Lymon was the only other Blue Raider in double figures, netting 11. Brown added eight, but the Blue Raiders shot just 37 percent for the game and were 9-of-27 from 3-point range. Watkins was a beast in the second half on the glass, grabbing 13 rebounds in the period, including five on the offensive glass. The Wildcats outrebounded Middle Tennessee, 36-18, in the second period, including 15 offensive boards. Watkins finished with 16 points and 16 rebounds, while Chowning added 13 and Mahoney had 10. Holt scored the first bucket of the second half for the Raiders before UK reeled off nine consecutive points, including a pair of putbacks by Victoria Dunlap. The Wildcats went ahead by as many as eight, as the Blue Raiders could not buy a basket in the first eight minutes of the second period, going 3-for-14, including at least two missed layups by Holt. Middle Tennessee slowly climbed back into the contest, starting with a 3-pointer from the wing by Jackie Pickel. Holt added a bucket and Brown made nice move in the low post for another. After the under eight media timeout, Lymon knocked down a 3-pointer, cutting the deficit to 49-48, but Pickel's 3-pointer the next time up the floor was off the mark. That was as close as the Raiders would get until Brown's 3-pointer sent the contest to overtime. The first half saw consecutive big runs by the two teams in the middle of the period. The Blue Raiders put together a 10-0 spurt over 2:01 that featured four points from Emily Queen and two each by Lymon, Pickel and Latoya Barclay for a 23-12 Raiders advantage. But the Wildcats answered with an 11-0 run to tie the contest, starting with a 3-pointer from the corner by Amani Franklin. Watkins added a 3-point play and Dunlap had a bucket before Chowning knocked a down a 3-pointer to cap the run with 6:29 left in the half. The teams were back-and-forth for the rest of the half from there, with Holt netting the final six points for the Raiders, including a driving layup with 1:06 left to put the visitors ahead 29-28 at the break. At one point at the end of the first half and the beginning of the second, Holt netted 13 consecutive points for the Blue Raiders.

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