Lady Raiders Fall to South Florida 70-62

November 12, 2004 · MT Media Relations

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee women's basketball (0-1) fell to South Florida (1-0) 70-62 in the first round of the SportsView.TV Women's Preseason WNIT Friday in the Murphy Center.

Middle Tennessee was up by nine, 51-42, with 12:35 to play until the Lady Bulls went on a 12-0 run to take the lead. The Lady Raiders took back the lead, for what would be the last time, on a Patrice Holmes three pointer, one of two from the senior guard in the game. USF reclaimed the lead on a jumper by Chanae Early and never looked back.

Down by six with 4:34 left to play, Middle Tennessee tried to mount a comeback. Holmes hit one of two from the free throw line to pull the Lady Raiders within five, 60-55, but South Florida answered with a bucket by Ezria Parsons to put the Lady Bulls back up by seven.

Middle Tennessee answered again with a bucket by Chrissy Givens with 2:04 left to play. Tia Stovall narrowed the USF lead to three when she stole the ball and went down the court to hit a lay-up with 1:54 to play. The Lady Bulls came back again when Rachael Sheats put USF up by five with 1:33 left.

South Florida's Jessica Dickson took away any Middle Tennessee momentum when she hit a jumper, to make the score 66-61, with one minute remaining in the game.

The Lady Raiders led at the half, 36-32, after being down by seven with 5:46 to play in the half. Middle Tennessee went on a 12-0 run to build a five point lead, 32-27, with 2:25 remaining. South Florida closed out the half with a three point basket by Early and a pair of free throws by Parsons to trim the Lady Raider lead to four at the break.

Middle Tennessee shot a respectable 44.6 percent from the field for the game, but was hampered by an anemic 30.3 shooting percentage in the second half. In contrast, South Florida was a scorching 54.8 percent from the field in the second half.

Stovall had her biggest night as a Lady Raider, scoring a career-high 28 points in the contest. She

tied her career high and broke it with two free throws with 1:15 in the game.

Sophomore forward Krystle Horton recorded a double-double with 10 points and 10 rebounds. She has extended her double figure scoring streak to 14, dating back to last season. Holmes added 11 points in the contest.

Middle Tennessee will be back in action on Friday November 19 when the Lady Raiders host Florida Atlantic. The doubleheader, with the men, begins with the women tipping off at 5:30 p.m.

NOTES:

SEASON OPENERS: With the loss to South Florida tonight, Middle Tennessee fell to 19-11 all-time in season openers. Under Stephany Smith, the Lady Raiders are now 5-3 in season openers.

STOVALL HAS BIG NIGHT: Junior Tia Stovall opened the 2004-05 campaign in style by pouring in a career-high 28 points on 11-for-18 shooting. It marked the seventh 20-point game of her career and the 31st double-digit scoring game. She also didn't commit one turnover in the contest, for the first time in her career.

HOLMES PASSES MCCLINIC: With six rebounds against South Florida, senior Patrice Holmes ran her career total to 596. That mark enabled the Bishopville, S.C., native to surpass current assistant coach Keisha McClinic for 14th place on the all-time list. Holmes now needs 24 more caroms to take over 13th place from Robin Hendrix.

INSIDE THE PAINT: Tonight's game marked the first time a Lady Raider team has ever played a contest in the Preseason WNIT ... The USF game marked the earliest date to a season opener in Middle Tennessee history ... Senior Patrice Holmes made her 92nd consecutive start tonight and the 92nd of her career, which ties Cortney Neeley and Sherry Smith for eighth place on the all-time list ... The loss in tonight's contest is the first season-opening defeat for the Lady Raiders since 1999-00 (67-70, UAB) ... Sophomore Krystle Horton's 10 points against USF is the 14th consecutive game the Murfreesboro native has scored in double figures dating back to last season.

QUOTES:

Head Coach Stephany Smith:

"We have known the entire time, in the scouting process, that South Florida was a quick and athletic basketball team. I thought one of the turning points in the game was when we made a big stop and turned around in transition and forced a long pass and gave it right back to them. I just thought that was a big key to the game, because they turned right around and turned it right back to us. However, it set the tempo of the game on what was going to take place in the next couple of minutes, which was us not getting good offensive execution and not getting good looks at the basket."

"We still have a lot of basketball ahead of us. We are young and we are going to be fine down the stretch."