

November 25, 2008

Lady Raiders stave off comeback attempt for home win

Team uses 19-point cushion to hold off Chattanooga

Athletic Communications

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee may not have played its most complete game of the season but the Blue Raiders did enough and held off an attempted comeback to defeat visiting Chattanooga, 73-65, Tuesday evening inside the Murphy Center in Murfreesboro, Tenn., in in-state women's basketball action.

Middle Tennessee (3-1) built a seven-point halftime lead and would stretch the margin to as high as 19, but the Lady Mocs never quit and came as close as six late in the contest.

Jackie Pickel hit her second of three 3-pointers on MT's opening possession of the second half to kick-start a 7-0 run in the period after Chattanooga (1-2) tallied the final two field goals of the opening stanza. As part of the spurt, reigning Sun Belt Conference Player of the Week **Alysha Clark** had a put-back layup following an **Anne Marie Lanning** miss as the shot clock nearly expired. The markers were two of her second-half 19 points, which alone would have outscored all players by themselves.

Pickel's triple at 12:54 helped cap an 8-0 Lady Raider run covering just over three minutes as they increased their lead to the game-high of 19, 53-34. However, in the next eight-and-a-half minutes, Chattanooga attempted its rally and pulled within eight, 62-54, on an Erin Ogan trey with 4:17 left.

The Blue Raiders never let the Lady Mocs to get closer than six, which came via another Ogan triple with 37 seconds remaining, the rest of the contest. Middle Tennessee hit 9-of-12 free throws over the final 3:32 to help seal the win.

Lanning saved a pair of first half offensive possessions nearly a shot clock violation, including a 35-foot, deep 3-pointer from the top of the arc at the 8:41 mark. It came during a period in which MT held Chattanooga scoreless for over four minutes after the visitors claimed their final advantage, 11-10, on a triple from Tagan Hatchett at 12:35.

The opening session lead swelled to as high as 13 on back-to-back treys from Lanning and **Chelsia Lymon**.

Clark led all players with 25 points, marking the third time in four games this season she has been the game's leading scorer. Lanning (14 points), Lymon (13) and **Brandi Brown** (10) joined her in double figures. It is the second time this season four Blue Raiders reached the double-digit plateau.



Alysha Clark, the reigning Sun Belt Player of the Week, led all players with 25 points against Chattanooga. (Bradley Lambert) 📷

Emily Queen came off the bench to grab a season-high 11 rebounds in 24 minutes. She also had four assists with zero turnovers and two assists. Lymon finished with identical assist-to-turnover numbers, while Brown posted a 5-to-0 ratio.

Ogan paced the Lady Mocs with 15 points on the strength of her three 3-pointers. Shanara Hollinquest added 13 points and a team-best nine caroms. Jenaya Wade-Fray contributed 10 points as Chattanooga had three starters reach the double-digit mark.

Middle Tennessee will conclude its three-game homestand with a 7 p.m. Friday matchup against Arizona inside the Murphy Center. Tickets can be purchased by calling 1-888-YES-MTSU.

Middle Tennessee Quotes vs. Chattanooga Coach Rick Insell

On UTC's resiliency

"They're about like us, in that they won't quit. Wes (Moore) is a good coach, and he had his second line bunch ready to go and they played hard. That group kept them in the game until their starters could come back in. I thought we played poorly on offense. We only had 11 turnovers but we got out-rebounded by nine, and they're not as good a rebounding team as Indiana so I can't really figure that out."

On the run to start second half

"We talked about taking Jackie (Pickel) out of the lineup and she took herself out with four fouls but Anne Marie (Lanning) and Alysha (Clark) stepped up. We're trying to score too quick and not letting things materialize. And then there are times that we're taking too much time. I think tonight's the first time I've seen our team have so much trouble beating the shot clock this year."

On Alysha's rebounding late

"She hit about six free throws down the stretch. She gets inside and is really hard to cover. She takes a lot of punishment for a kid her size and ended up with 25 points and six rebounds. I think another thing that got overlooked was that Emily (Queen), even though she didn't have any points, she had 11 rebounds. That's going to get her a lot more playing time. Right now Emily's one of the best players we have. We've got to get her into the lineup and she has to start finishing but we had some others who didn't finish like I would've liked."

On team so far

"Anytime you play an Arizona or a Chattanooga at home you want to win those games. Especially if you aspirations of going to the NCAA Tournament and we do. Chattanooga was fighting hard too because they're a lot like us. This was a big win for them last year, so hopefully it will end up being a big win for us at the end of the year."

Alysha Clark

On areas the team needs to work on

"Our defense is killing us right now. It's just a learning process, we have to get everyone on the same page with what coach wants. We have a lot of people who are good defensively as individuals but we need to come together as a team."

On rebounding late

"When the ball goes up I have to go get it, especially late like that. Coach said we were getting out rebounded at halftime so I made it a goal to crash the boards hard on offense like they were doing to us. In crucial situations like that offensive rebounds can help eat clock so that's what I wanted to do."

On playing with four fouls

"I just have to play smart. I have to be less aggressive but still not give up easy shots. I'm not going to lay down. I thought it was important for me to show I can play with four fouls because there might be a game down the road where we have foul trouble with everybody. We can't go into those situations worrying about fouls we have to go win the game."

Anne Marie Lanning

On confidence over the last couple of games

"I feel really good, but I'd rather feel good as a good as a team. We have some things we need to work on. My confidence is high right now because of the last couple games but we need to get better as a team."

On UTC's run in the second half

"We kept having defensive break downs. We weren't playing smart and had some mental breakdowns. That could beat us in crucial situations."

On 35-footer to beat shot clock

"I didn't realize it going down. I heard people screaming and I looked up and saw two seconds so I just shot it. I was surprised it went in."

Chattanooga

Head Coach Wes Moore

On committing 23 turnovers against Middle Tennessee

"It seemed a lot more than that. Again, they do a great job with their press. That really takes you out of your game because you can't run an offense. You are just trying to beat the press and find the open person. Last year, we had some veterans that could do that. This year with young players we just didn't do a very good job of it. Probably, the most disappointing part of it is, I don't feel like we've got the tenacity and toughness that we need. We are going to have to find it in a hurry."

On how to rebound after this loss

"Again, I told this team, we are going to do as well as they want to do this year. They've got to want it. They've got to show some passion, excitement and enthusiasm about playing the game. Otherwise, we might as well be playing for next year."

On limiting Hollinquest's play in the first half

"I thought our gamble worked decently. We kept her out and Clark got her third foul. We weren't able to take advantage of it in the second half. I felt like we were still close enough to have a shot at them. We had Shanara with just two fouls. We got to keep her out of foul trouble. That's two games in a row. We are just not the same team when she is sitting over there with me."

*On the play of Middle Tennessee's **Alysha Clark***

"Their philosophy is very similar to ours, although you couldn't tell it tonight because their press took us out of what we wanted to do. They isolate Clark because there are not many people that can guard her one-on-one. If you decided to double her, they have a lot of shooters around that can make you pay for it. Pick your poison."

On being able to handle the press

"We watched film from a year ago. We thought we would do a better job against it because last year we did a better job against it. Give them credit. They buried it and really did a good job putting pressure on our point guards. They exploited our inexperience."

Newspaper Box Score Chattanooga vs Middle Tennessee 11/25/08 7 p.m. at Murfreesboro, Tenn. (Murphy Center) At Murfreesboro, Tenn. (Murphy Center) MIDDLE TENNESSEE 73, CHATTANOOGA 65 CHATTANOOGA (1-2) OGAN, Erin 5-10 2-2 15; HOLLINQUEST, Shanara 5-10 3-6 13; WADE-FRAY, Jenaya 5-13 0-1 10; MASON, LaCondra 3-4 1-1 7; TOWNSEND,

Tenisha 2-5 2-2 7; MURRAY, Anelia 2-4 1-3 5; DEWART, Bailey 2-6 0-0 4; HATCHETT, Tagan 1-1 0-0 3; NEIL, Andrea 0-3 1-2 1; ROLLINS, Megan 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 25-56 10-17 65. MIDDLE TENNESSEE (3-1) Clark, Alysha 9-16 7-8 25; Lanning, Anne Marie 4-12 3-4 14; Lymon, Chelsia 3-10 4-6 13; Brown, Brandi 4-10 1-1 10; Pickel, Jackie 3-7 0-0 9; Garrett, Dana 1-1 0-0 2; Stewart, Tina 0-0 0-0 0; Queen, Emily 0-5 0-0 0. Totals 24-61 15-19 73. Chattanooga..... 28 37 - 65 Middle Tennessee..... 35 38 - 73
 3-point goals--Chattanooga 5-17 (OGAN, Erin 3-6; TOWNSEND, Tenisha 1-3; HATCHETT, Tagan 1-1; DEWART, Bailey 0-1; NEIL, Andrea 0-1; WADE-FRAY, Jenaya 0-5), Middle Tennessee 10-28 (Lanning, Anne Marie 3-9; Pickel, Jackie 3-7; Lymon, Chelsia 3-7; Brown, Brandi 1-3; Queen, Emily 0-1; Clark, Alysha 0-1). Fouled out--Chattanooga-None, Middle Tennessee-Pickel, Jackie. Rebounds--Chattanooga 42 (HOLLINQUEST, Shanara 9), Middle Tennessee 33 (Queen, Emily 11). Assists--Chattanooga 9 (MASON, LaCondra 4), Middle Tennessee 15 (Brown, Brandi 5). Total fouls--Chattanooga 20, Middle Tennessee 21. Technical fouls--Chattanooga-None, Middle Tennessee-None. A-2806

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