

Three-game winning streak carries Blue Raiders into LSU

Middle Tennessee won its last three home games to start the season 4-1 for the first time under head coach Rick Insell.

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - A three-game winning streak and victories in four of its first five games overall lead the Middle Tennessee women's basketball team into a 1 p.m. Sunday matchup with LSU inside the Pete Maravich Assembly Center in Baton Rouge, La.

The Blue Raiders won their third straight with a 77-57 home triumph over Arizona Friday night inside the Murphy Center. MT torched the

Wildcats for a team season-high 13 3-pointers, including a career-best seven from sophomore Anne Marie Lanning. Her 21 points set a career high and matched the output of junior Alysha Clark.

Clark finished with her second double-double in a Lady Raider uniform, and 40th overall of her career, sharing game-high scoring honors with 21 points and adding 10 rebounds. Classmate Jackie Pickel chipped in 10 points, giving MT three starters in double figures.

The 4-1 start is the best in the Rick Insell era (2006-present) and Middle Tennessee's best since the 2003-04 squad, which finished 24-8.

"We are excited about playing LSU," said Insell. "They have the type of team I feel can match up with us and give us challenges we have not met. They're young and you never know what to expect out of a team as young as they are. They are even younger than us. They can come out and play way above their heads or way below their talent level.

"I feel real good about our chances. I think our kids are excited right now and have a little momentum going. I don't think we're close to where we should be. After the three recent home games (Indiana, Chattanooga and Arizona), I am very pleased to be sitting 4-1."

LSU enters the game with a 1-2 record and is coming off a 57-48 home loss to Xavier Wednesday.



Allison Hightower paced the Tigers in the contest, putting up 15 points and 11 rebounds for the team's only double-figure marks in both categories. She is the team's leading scorer through the opening three games, averaging 13.3 ppg.

Sunday's game will be the fourth in the series with LSU owning a 2-1 advantage; however, Middle Tennessee garnered a 67-56 home victory against the then-No. 8 Tigers Dec. 28, 2007, inside the Murphy Center. It was the first meeting in the series since the 1986 NCAA Tournament Second Round.

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