

Lady Raiders grind out non-conference win over Lady Govs

Middle Tennessee closes home non-conference slate with nine-point win

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Middle Tennessee did not play its best game of the season but did enough Tuesday night to gut-out a 62-53 non-conference victory over Austin Peay inside the Murphy Center in Murfreesboro, Tenn. The Blue Raiders shot 23-of-55 from the field, but converted 11-of-12 (91.7 percent) free throws in the win.

Junior Brandi Brown helped spark the MT offense with a season-high 14 points on 6-of-9 field goals and ignite the Lady Raider defense with a season-best three blocked shots in playing 36 minutes. She scored eight points, including her only free throws, as part of a 20-4 Blue Raider surge over a near-nine minute stretch of the second half to allow Middle Tennessee (7-4) to pull away after Ashley Herring tied it for the Lady Govs at 31 apiece with 17:18 remaining. Brown's jumper at 8:29 capped the run and put the hosts ahead 51-35.

The Blue Raider defense, however, could not prevent Austin Peay (4-6) from attempting a comeback. Although time was on Middle Tennessee's side, the



Lady Govs would tally 12 of the next 17 points to trim the deficit to nine, 56-47, on an old-fashioned three-point play by Whitney Hanley at the 3:17 mark. Austin Peay would knock the margin down to nine on two other occasions, the last coming on a Herring jumper with eight seconds to play for the final score.

Junior Alysha Clark kept the Lady Raiders ahead early in the contest by netting 10 of the team's opening 14 points as they struggled from long-range. MT missed its first 10 3-pointer attempts before Jackie Pickel converted a pair just over a minute apart at 2:16 and 1:10. Her final trey matched the Blue Raiders' largest lead of the half at eight points, 29-21, but the Lady Govs again recorded the final four points of the stanza to enter the locker rooms down four, 29-25.

Clark ended the game with a game-high 22 points and game-best nine rebounds. Emily Queen added eight points, while Pickel and Anne Marie Lanning each hit two 3-pointers to finish with six markers apiece.

Brooke Faulkner paced Austin Peay with 11 points off the bench, while Herring and April Thomas each poured in 10. Thomas grabbed a team-high eight rebounds in a team-best 36 minutes.

Middle Tennessee will next open its Sun Belt Conference slate with a 7 p.m. Saturday game against Troy inside the Murphy Center. It will mark the final contest before Christmas for the Blue Raiders. It will also be Hoop and Hollar for a Dollar Night, meaning all tickets are \$1.

MT Quotes vs. Austin Peay Head Coach Rick Insell

On offensive struggle tonight

"Every time we'd substitute and put a different group of players in we'd get a run. Then I'd sub a couple other girls and they'd get a run because we'd miss a defensive assignment or turn the ball over. So it was not a pretty win, we'll take it and we'll be happy with a win. But that's all we're happy with. We'll have to work on some stuff at practice, especially finishing. We have to finish our shots better. Alysha Clark especially missed a lot of shots close to the basket."

On Brandi Brown's play

"Brandi was the reason we won the ball game, by far. She stepped up and wanted the ball in the second half, went two for two at the free throw line. I thought she could've done a better job of rebounding but she blocked three shots and contested several others. I'm very happy with her play. If she could have got a few more rebounds it could have been even more of a complete game, but I'm very happy with how she played."

On second half run

"We just changed offenses. We used more motion and set some picks to get Jackie Pickel more involved. Anne Marie Lanning was able to move more out there too. I thought Emily Queen made some good drives too but we still had 16 turnovers. That's down from what we've been having but we had 12 of those in the second half. That's why they stayed in the game was because of our turnovers."

On defense during second half run

"In our half court defense we decided to pressure more and that forced them into some turnovers. Then we were able to get the ball in transition. But we've come through a tough stretch of games so

we'll go to practice but it won't be as intense the next couple days."

Brandi Brown

On tonight's play

"We were having a hard time all around but I kept making shots so they kept coming to me. Our offense works more through the posts in practice than it does in the games so I'm not used to getting the ball that much but I guess it was my night."

On having three blocks

"Coach doesn't really like us to block shots because if you're trying to block then you might be out of position on defense. They were shorter than any other team we've played. Plus Coach has been telling me to play more help side defense so that puts me in a better position to block shots but he'd rather us just play good defense."

Anne Marie Lanning

On tonight's struggles

"It wasn't anything they did, it was just us. We kept turning the ball over and doing a lot of uncharacteristic things. That's what we've been talking about for the last week but keep doing some of these things so we'll have to get it straightened out in practice this week."

On turnovers

"Our focus before the game was to have no more than 12 for the game. I thought we were doing really well at halftime only having four and then in the second half we broke down again. We just have to take care of the ball better."

On preparation for conference season

"We all get along well and our chemistry is good but right now we're just doing some uncharacteristic things and we'll just have to get on the same page with what we're doing in the next few practices."

Austin Peay

Head Coach Carrie Daniels

Opening Statement

"First off, give Middle Tennessee a lot of credit. I think their defense obviously contributed to the turnover column for us. I think ultimately the turnovers are a direct result to the final score on our end. When you look at the stat sheet, I think that is what kind of did us in for the game. I think some of them were unforced. There were a lot of times where we could have controlled a lot of those turnovers. We've got to learn to do a much better job on the turnover end. This is our second game where we've had 25 turnovers. We have to take pride when the ball is in our possession. We just need to get that number down. Middle Tennessee does a great job. They are averaging around 19 to 20 forced turnovers per game. We knew coming in that it was going to be a challenge."

On out rebounding Middle Tennessee 36-to-29

"Rebounding is something that we stressed. I challenged the girls before the game to really crash the boards. I knew Middle was going to do a good job crashing the offensive boards on their end. I challenged the girls and told them that we really had to put a body on Middle Tennessee's players and box them out defensively. I am really pleased with the box out effort and the rebounding margin."

I think we did a good job there. Obviously, the one thing that plagues us is that turnover margin."

On staying in the game with Middle Tennessee

"When you are on the road and you're playing a team like Middle Tennessee, you know they are going to make runs. Every good team goes on a run. You just have to be prepared to sustain that run and keep your composure and be able to counter that. When Middle made their run, we didn't really handle it well. We kind of lost our ground and got a little shaky. We continued to make turnovers and they fed off of that. They got some run-outs on us and made some easy baskets. That fuels them and gets their momentum going. We tried to come back a little bit, but we had dug a hole. At that point, it seemed like we were trading baskets. We couldn't trade baskets. When you dig a hole and trade baskets, you're not gaining any ground."

On Austin Peay's overall team performance

"April (Thomas) is coming off a double-double from Saturday night. I felt she did a pretty good job tonight. We had some other players step up and hit some big shots for us. We didn't seem to be quite in-synch totally as a team. I felt at times there was some energy. But as a total team effort, the energy wasn't what we needed. Again, we are learning and we are trying to improve each and every game."

Newspaper Box Score Austin Peay vs Middle Tennessee 12/16/08 7 p.m. at Murfreesboro, Tenn. (Murphy Center) At Murfreesboro, Tenn. (Murphy Center) MIDDLE TENNESSEE 62, AUSTIN PEAY 53 AUSTIN PEAY (4-6) FAULKNER, Brooke 4-9 1-1 11; HERRING, Ashley 5-14 0-0 10; THOMAS, April 3-9 4-4 10; HANLEY, Whitney 3-5 2-3 8; JAMEN, Nicole 3-9 0-0 6; RAYNER, Jasmine 3-3 0-0 6; RICHARDSON, Salem 1-3 0-0 2; POLLOCK, Emily 0-2 0-0 0. Totals 22-54 7-8 53. MIDDLE TENNESSEE (7-4) Clark, Alysha 8-19 5-6 22; Brown, Brandi 6-9 2-2 14; Queen, Emily 4-9 0-0 8; Lanning, Anne Marie 2-4 0-0 6; Pickel, Jackie 2-8 0-0 6; Lymon, Chelsia 0-4 4-4 4; Garrett, Dana 1-2 0-0 2; Davis, Shytoria 0-0 0-0 0; Stewart, Tina 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 23-55 11-12 62. Austin Peay..... 25 28 - 53 Middle Tennessee..... 29 33 - 62 3-point goals--Austin Peay 2-11 (FAULKNER, Brooke 2-5; HERRING, Ashley 0-3; HANLEY, Whitney 0-1; RICHARDSON, Salem 0-1; POLLOCK, Emily 0-1), Middle Tennessee 5-20 (Lanning, Anne Marie 2-4; Pickel, Jackie 2-6; Clark, Alysha 1-2; Lymon, Chelsia 0-4; Queen, Emily 0-1; Brown, Brandi 0-3). Fouled out--Austin Peay-None, Middle Tennessee-None. Rebounds--Austin Peay 36 (THOMAS, April 8), Middle Tennessee 29 (Clark, Alysha 9). Assists--Austin Peay 9 (HERRING, Ashley 3), Middle Tennessee 9 (Pickel, Jackie 4). Total fouls--Austin Peay 13, Middle Tennessee 13. Technical fouls--Austin Peay-None, Middle Tennessee-None. A-2612

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