Stovall's Basket Assures Lady Raider Win 56-55

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Tia Stovall hit a lay-up with 44 seconds left to play to assure Middle Tennessee (10-5, 2-0 SBC) a 56-55 win over Arkansas State (7-8, 1-2 SBC) Saturday in the Murphy Center.

Stovall dished in the eventual winning bucket off an assist by Chrissy Givens after Arkansas State's Vanessa Schrock was called for a foul.

Arkansas State came down the court looking to take the lead back as Sims drove inside for a lay-up, but Krystle Horton had other ideas. Horton positioned herself in front of the basket to take the charge and get the ball back into Lady Raider hands.

With 15 seconds remaining, Arkansas State fouled Chrissy Givens on the in bounds play and put her on the line. Givens missed the front-end of a one-and-one and gave the Lady Indians one more chance. Arkansas State's Ali Carter launched a three-point shot that was wide and Zeneta Lane pulled down the rebound for ASU, but turned the ball over when Stovall picked up the steal to end the game.

Middle Tennessee led at the half 35-31, but Arkansas State came storming out in the second half thanks to a Sims three-pointer. Arkansas State tied the game at 41 with 15:44 to play, but Stovall gave the lead back to the Lady Raiders when she hit 1-of-2 free throws. Middle Tennessee built a four point lead three times before the Lady Indians tied the game again at 49.

Arkansas State took its first lead of the second half when Katie Caraway hit 1-of-2 free throws to make the score 50-49 ASU. After ASU built a four point led of their own, Middle Tennessee scored four consecutive points for the eighth tie of the game.

Carter hit a jumper with 1:46 to play to again give the advantage to Arkansas State 55-53. Stovall

pulled the Lady Raiders within one, 55-54, when she hit 1-of-2 free throws with 1:32 on the clock.

Middle Tennessee committed a season-high 30 turnovers in the game and forced Arkansas State to 25. The Lady Raiders shot 43.3 percent from the field and was just 3-of-7 for 42.9 percent from the charity stripe.

Givens led all scorers with 14 points in the game, just two points off her season-high. Stovall ended the game with 11 points and also had seven rebounds. Senior guard Patrice Holmes collected a season-high 12 rebounds and also had five assists and five steals.

Middle Tennessee will play its first Sun Belt Conference road game of the season when the team travels to New Orleans on January 20. Tip-off is set for 7 p.m.

NOTES:

HOLMES DOING A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING: Senior Patrice Holmes did not have one of her best games in the win over Arkansas State, but when things were not going completely her way in one area she found a way to get it done in another. Holmes, who made just 4 of 12 shots from the field, registered nine points, a season-high 12 rebounds, five assists, five steals and three blocks. Over her past two games, Holmes has collected 12 steals and five blocks.

GOOD START: With today's win over Arkansas State, Middle Tennessee has jumped out to a 2-0 record in Sun Belt Conference action. This marks just the second time in school history the Lady Raiders have started an SBC schedule 2-0. The last time it happened came during the 2002-03 season.

CLEANING THE GLASS: A difference in today's game came in the rebounding department where the Lady Raiders collected 45 to outrebound the Lady Indians by 12. The 45 caroms were the most by the Lady Raiders since registering 45 against South Carolina State on Dec. 22, 2003 - a span of 37 games.

HOLMES PASSES MCCLURE: Senior Patrice Holmes registered a game-high five assists in the win over Arkansas State to move her past Jessica McClure for fifth place on the all-time list at Middle Tennessee. Holmes now has 398 assists and needs just two more to take over fourth place from Kim Webb.

THREE IN A ROW FOR MT BENCH: For the third straight game, Middle Tennessee won the battle of the reserves as the Lady Raider bench outscored ASU, 12-7. The Lady Raiders are now 3-0 this season when outscoring the oppositions bench players. Sophomore Krystle Horton led the way for Middle Tennessee with eight points.

PLAYER OF THE GAME: Members of the working media voted Chrissy Givens the Alexander Automotive Family Player of the Game. Givens finished with 14 points and four rebounds.

INSIDE THE PAINT: The Lady Raiders are now a perfect 5-0 against ASU in Murphy Center ... Keying Middle Tennessee's 2-0 SBC start has been defense where the Lady Raiders have held their two opponents to a combined 34.3 percent shooting (37-108) ... Middle Tennessee's 30 turnovers against ASU is the most by a Lady Raider team since the 2001-02 squad committed 30 miscues in a home win against Lipscomb ... Tia Stovall recorded a personal-best four blocked shots in the win

over ASU ... For the second time this season and the second time in her career, Chrissy Givens recorded double digit points for the second game in a row with 14 ... MT is now 8-2 this season when leading at the half.

QUOTES:

Head Coach Stephany Smith: "Can you imagine 55 turnovers in one basketball game? The way I saw it, I thought we had 50 by ourselves. Unfortunately, this was not a good representation on television for the Sun Belt Conference. Arkansas State is a much better team than what they were today. I pray that we are a much better team than what we were today. We had an opportunity to play a very pretty basketball game, but it was far from that."

"We never had clean stops in the second half and down the stretch. If we ever got a stop, it bounced around before we ever came up with it. After the second or third shot, we would come up with it. It was just a very ugly game."

Forward Tia Stovall: "I guess we got better rebounding as they game went on. We tried to box out hard and really get on the boards."

Guard Patrice Holmes: "We weren't running our offense right. We weren't reversing the ball. We didn't execute crisp passes."

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