

## Defense Strong in 65-41 Triumph

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### **MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -**

Three Middle Tennessee players scored in double figures, led by Tia Stovall's 12 points, as every Lady Raider scored in a 65-41 victory over New Mexico State Saturday afternoon at Murphy Center.

The Lady Raiders ran their winning streak to seven overall and remained perfect in Sun Belt play at 6-0, setting up a possible meeting of two undefeated teams Thursday night in Bowling Green, Ky. Western Kentucky takes on Louisiana-Lafayette Saturday night at home.

The Lady Raiders used balanced scoring and what is quickly becoming their calling card, tenacious defense, limiting the Aggies to just 41 points on 30 percent shooting.

Middle Tennessee jumped out to a quick 6-0 lead to start the game thanks to a three-point play from Chrissy Givens and a three-pointer by Ditte Jakobsen. The Lady Raiders never looked back, taking a 36-22 edge at halftime and opening the lead to as many as 24 late in the second half.

Givens added 10 points while Krystle Horton had 10 points and a career-high seven steals, her second straight game with a career high in thefts. Freshman Starr Orr added nine points, five rebounds and three assists in 22 minutes, making up for an off-day from the floor by senior Patrice Holmes, who scored just six points on 2-of-10 shooting.

New Mexico State was led by Trecha Kennedy's 13 points, the only Aggie in double figures.

The Lady Raiders hit the road next week, starting with a Thursday matchup in Bowling Green



against the Lady 'Toppers. Middle Tennessee returns home February 10 in a doubleheader with the men.

## **PLAYER/COACH QUOTES**

### **Middle Tennessee Head Coach Stephany Smith**

"Because it is more of my mentality, we have preached defense for a long time. Now that we have upperclassmen that have heard it year after year, I think this has been a season where we have really started putting the pieces together on the defensive end.

"I was very impressed with our defensive effort. I think it continues to get better. We continue to understand to take away one side of the floor. I was really pleased to see Star [Orr] be more aggressive on the defensive end in the last couple of games. We were starting to get her more aggressive on the offensive end, but she was still a little nonchalant on the defensive end. I think she has been a lot better in the last two basketball games.

"I was pleased with our start, and then we immediately went through a lull. There was no communication. I had to bark a little at the first media timeout. We just weren't listening and not paying attention. We were just being lethargic. But, I was really pleased with the way we bounced back."

### **Middle Tennessee Guard Star Orr**

"When I first came here I was real nervous. Then, Coach Smith told me all she wanted me to do was drive and rebound. Then, I started doing it in practice. I realized if I can do it in practice, I can do it in a game."

### **Middle Tennessee Guard Chrissy Givens**

"I think our defense bothered them. It all starts with communication, and today we had a lot of communication. We denied a lot of passes, and got our hands on a lot of passes. The defense is our bread and butter. As long as we play defense, the offense is going to come. That was a big part of the game tonight."

## **GAME NOTES**

**FRONT RUNNERS:** Thanks to a stingy defense and getting off to solid starts, Middle Tennessee has only trailed 8:56 in its six conference games combined. In fact, the Lady Raiders have not trailed in a game since late in the first half at New Orleans on Jan. 20. Following today's wire-to-wire win, the Lady Raiders have not trailed in a game in 142.09 minutes and counting.

**TURNING UP THE HEAT IN LEAGUE PLAY:** The main reason for Middle Tennessee's 6-0 start to Sun Belt play this year has been its effort on the defensive end. In the six games combined, Middle Tennessee has held the opposition to 34.6 (104-301) percent shooting from the field, forced an average of 24.3 (146) turnovers, collected an average of 15.2 (91) steals, and allowed only 47.8 points per game.

**HOME SWEET HOME:** The Murphy Center was once again very kind to the Lady Raiders as they won their ninth of the season at the 'Glass House' to move their all-time mark to 275-86. Since joining the Sun Belt Conference in 2000-01, the Lady Raiders have a record of 26-7 at home against conference foes to stand just a half game up on Western Kentucky with the best mark in the league during that stretch. With the victory over NMSU today, the Lady Raiders have now won 10 conference games in a row at the Murphy Center (last loss was a double overtime thriller against

Western Kentucky on Feb. 5, 2004).

**STEALS MACHINE:** Senior sensation Patrice Holmes climbed a little closer to the all-time steals record with three thefts in the win over New Mexico State on Saturday afternoon. Holmes, who has 27 steals over her past six games, now has 292 career steals to stand just two behind current record holder Kim Webb. The All-America candidate also leads the Sun Belt Conference in steals with 67 on the season.

**KEEPING THEM UNDER 40:** Since 2000-01, the Lady Raiders have held the opposition under 40 percent shooting 68 times and are 57-11 in those games. The win over NMSU today marked the 11th time this year Middle Tennessee has held the opposition under 40 percent with the Lady Raiders posting a 10-1 record in those contests. MT held NMSU to just 30.0 percent shooting, which is the lowest percentage of the season and the lowest since holding Arkansas State to just 27.1 percent on Feb. 19, 2004 - a span of 27 games.

**HORTON SETS NEW MARK:** Sophomore Krystle Horton has been racking up the steals over the past two games for the Lady Raiders. During that span, Horton has collected 12 steals, including a career-best of seven in the win over New Mexico State. It marks Horton's best two-game total in her young career. For the season, Horton now has 42 steals which is a new single-season record for the Murfreesboro native.

**PLAYER OF THE GAME:** Members of the working media voted Tia Stovall the Alexander Automotive Family Player of the Game. Stovall finished with 12 points, four boards, and one assist in 23 minutes.

**INSIDE THE PAINT:** The 6-0 conference start matches the fifth best start to league play by the Lady Raiders in school history ... Ditte Jakobsen equaled her career-high with two made three-pointers and also matched her personal-best with four assists ... The 41 points allowed by the Lady Raiders today was the lowest total of the season and the third straight game they have set a new mark ... Patrice Holmes made her 110th career start today to pass Jonelda Buck for fourth place on the all-time list ... MT is now 6-0 this season when the Lady Raider reserves outscore the opponents' bench players ... Today's win was the seventh in a row for Middle Tennessee and its 10th out of the last 11 games.

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