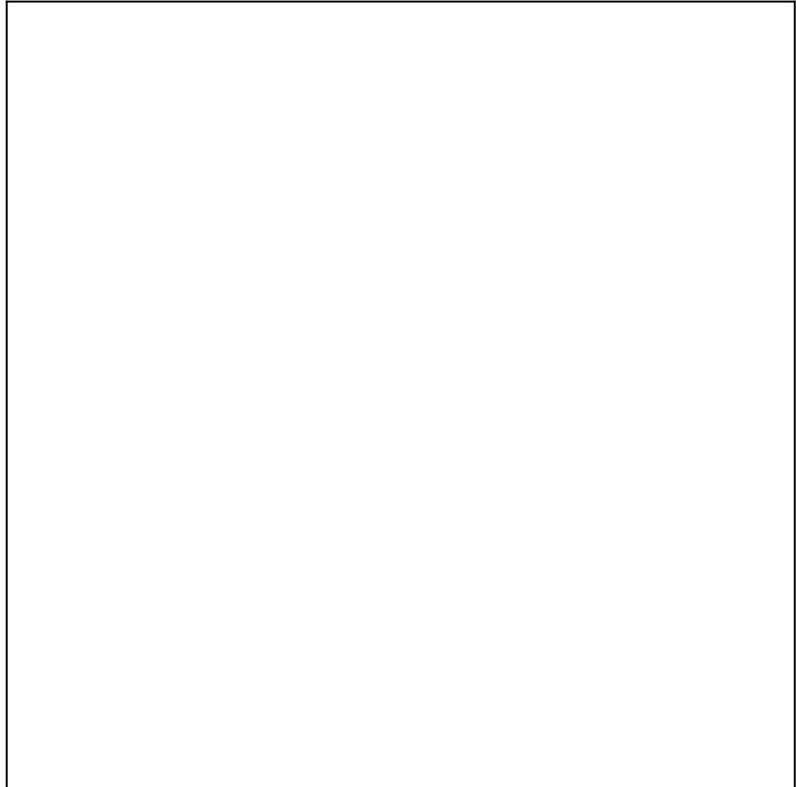


# Lady Raiders roll past Western Kentucky, 79-55

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**MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -** Middle Tennessee drew to within one game of the Sun Belt Conference East Division lead with a convincing, 79-55, win over Western Kentucky Thursday night in front of 1,107 at Murphy Center. The Lady Raiders placed four players in double figures, collected a season-high 21 steals, and forced 30 turnovers to pick up their seventh straight home win.

Senior Tia Stovall led the Lady Raider attack with 21 points, 10 rebounds and five steals in recording her third career double-double, while Patrice Holmes added 14 points, six boards, five assists and four steals. Krystle Horton and Chrissy Givens were also in double figures with 13 points each.



The Lady Hilltoppers (18-8; 11-2), behind Crystal Kelly and Camryn Whitaker, stormed out of the locker room to start the second half and pulled to within 41-39 at the first media timeout. But that is as close as it would get.

Middle Tennessee (18-8; 10-3) answered with a game-deciding 20-4 run over the next eight minutes to take a 61-43 lead. During one stretch of the run, Horton scored eight straight for the Lady Raiders.

The Lady Raiders put it in cruise control the rest of the way to come up with their 10th league win of the season. It marks the second straight year Middle Tennessee has recorded double digit league victories.

Behind a balanced attack, the Lady Raiders opened the game on fire by jumping out to a 16-4 lead with 14:05 left in the first half. In that run, Middle Tennessee collected four steals and forced seven turnovers.

The Lady Hilltoppers quickly got back into the game as Kelly and Leslie Logsdon combined for

seven points over the next two minutes to cut the lead in half, 18-12. But the Lady Raiders put together a run of their own by outscoring WKU 11-3 over the next six minutes to take a 29-15 lead.

In a half of runs, the Hilltoppers took their turn and battled back to within four points at 31-27 when Logsdon connected on a jumper at the :53 second mark from the left baseline. However, Lady Raider freshman Lakira Boyd answered with a clutch three-pointer from the top of the circle with :29 seconds left to extend the lead back to seven at intermission.

The Lady Raiders will take on Florida International in the regular season finale on Saturday at 2 PM. The game is being televised by ESPN Regional.

### **2004-05 MIDDLE TENNESSEE BASKETBALL POSTGAME NOTES**

**STEALS 'R' US:** Middle Tennessee collected a season-high 21 steals in the win over Western Kentucky to run its season total to 341, which is just 26 off the single-season record. The 21 thefts against WKU marked the most in a game by a Lady Raider team since the 2002-03 squad recorded 21 in a victory at South Carolina State on Dec. 14, 2002 - a span of 82 games.

**HOLMES NOW ALL-TIME LEADER:** Senior Patrice Holmes set a new Middle Tennessee record in the Western Kentucky contest on Thursday. Holmes picked up her 117th career start to break the record established by Lady Raider great Kim Webb. Holmes' 117 games played tied Cortney Neeley for the second most in school history behind co-leaders Natalie Sneed and Jonelda Buck (118).

**HOT IN FEBRUARY:** Under Stephany Smith, the Lady Raiders are now an impressive 44-15 (.746) in the month of February.

**DOUBLE DIGIT SBC WINS:** Tonight's win over Western Kentucky was the 10th Sun Belt victory of the season for Middle Tennessee. It marks the second straight season the Lady Raiders have won 10 SBC games as the team went 10-4 in 2003-04. A victory over FIU on Saturday would give the Lady Raiders their most conference wins since picking up 11 in their final year of the Ohio Valley Conference (1999-00).

**PLAYER OF THE GAME:** Members of the working media voted Tia Stovall the Alexander Automotive Family Player of the Game. Stovall finished with 21 points, 10 rebounds, and five steals to earn the honor.

**INSIDE THE PAINT:** Middle Tennessee won its seventh straight game at home ... Ditte Jakobsen recorded a career-high four steals ... The 24-point margin of victory over Western Kentucky Thursday was the largest for Middle Tennessee over the Lady Hilltoppers in the history of the rivalry ... Tia Stovall's 10 rebounds marked her most in a game since collecting 10 against Wisconsin in the fourth game of the year ... Chrissy Givens, with four steals against WKU, now has at least three steals in five straight games.

### **QUOTES**

#### **MT Head Coach Stephany Smith**

"I thought playing the first half with a patch-work lineup was a pretty big key in the game. I think it is a testament to how strong we were playing on the defensive end. We haven't been playing that kind of defense. It is what has been missing for us for the last couple of weeks. I thought we were very tenacious on the defensive end. Even when we had a very inexperienced lineup in, we still held it

together enough to have a lead going into the half. I really did think that was big. I thought it was strong for us to have the lead with the lineup we had in to close out the first half."

"I look forward to grading the film and counting the number of times we had fast break opportunities. At the half, we were seven of nine in transition. Not only did we get a good number of transition opportunities, we also took advantage of the opportunities that we had. In the second half during our run, it was 100 percent on the defensive end. All year long our defense has outscored our offense. We were very fortunate tonight against a very good and talented Western Kentucky team to have gotten the transition opportunities that we did."

**MT Guard Patrice Holmes**

"This is a great rivalry. Whenever we play them, I know I have to bring my 'A' game. Being a leader on the team, I knew I had to take over the game. I had to make sure everybody was in the right spot and keep everybody calm."

"Our defense has been missing for the past two weeks. Tonight, we really turned up our defensive intensity and it caused them a lot of problems."

**MT Forward Tia Stovall**

"The loss in Arkansas made us realize that it doesn't matter what everyone else is doing. We just have to concentrate on ourselves and get ourselves prepared for the tournament. We are using these two games to get ourselves better. I think we proved that tonight."

"Every team is going to have their runs on any given night. We had it set in our minds that we were not going to lose this basketball game. We were going to fight till the end. It all started on defense. We had team defense that led to team offense. We all just came together."

**WKU Head Coach Mary Taylor-Cowles**

"I really don't know what to say about that game. It is a situation where if we want to look at the positives, the only positive is we have a film of it and can watch over and over again and try to learn from it. That was not the Western Kentucky basketball team that I was coaching a month ago when we played this basketball team. I don't think Middle Tennessee was that much different. It wasn't like they organized a new offensive system. But, I do think on a scale of one to 10 that their intensity level was a 12. I don't even know if ours got off the bottom. I think that is always going to present a huge difference from an intensity standpoint when you have two teams like this."

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