Lady Raiders fall to No. 14 Texas Tech in NCAA Tournament

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DALLAS, Texas - Middle Tennessee dug a big hole in the first half and almost climbed out in the final 20 minutes, finally succumbing to fourth-seeded and 14th-ranked Texas Tech, 80-69, in the second round of the NCAA Tournament here Monday night.

The Lady Raiders fell behind by as many as 21 points in the opening minutes of the second half, but fought back for the final 18 minutes, pulling as close as 71-62 with 4:32 to play in the game.

But Texas Tech refused to let the Lady Raiders any closer, matching bucket-for-bucket down the stretch, thanks in large part to junior point guard Erin Grant, who scored 12 points and dished out eight assists in the contest. Grant netted 10 of her points in the second half to help TTU reach the Sweet 16 after missing out last season.

Texas Tech dominated the first half in every phase, shooting 63 percent from the field to take a 46-29 edge at the break. Alesha Robertson knocked down a trio of three-pointers for TTU, while Cisti Greenwalt added 12 points.

The Lady Raiders got 13 from Patrice Holmes in the opening 20 minutes, including three 3-pointers, and Krystle Horton had nine at the break. But Texas Tech had a 20-11 advantage in rebounds and disrupted the Lady Raider offense, causing bad shots and bad timing on the offensive end.

But Middle Tennessee would not go away, putting together a 12-0 run to get within 50-41 with 14:04 remaining. Holmes netted seven in the run, nailing one of her five trifectas to end the stretch.

Texas Tech pushed the lead back to 16 at the eight-minute mark, but once again the Lady Raiders fought back with a 13-6 run to get within nine with four minutes to play. Grant hit two short jumpers in the final minutes and Robertson put an exclamation point on the win for Tech, knocking down her fifth and final three with 12.9 seconds remaining for the final margin.

Horton played one of her best games of the season, recording her third double-double this year with 17 points and 10 rebounds. Chrissy Givens finished with 14 points, 12 in the second half, while Holmes tallied 25 points, five rebounds, three assists and three steals in her final game as a Lady Raider.

Robertson netted 25 for Texas Tech, with Greenwalt adding 19, Grant 12 and LaToya Davis 11 and 16 rebounds.

The Lady Raiders concluded the season 24-9 overall, putting together the best two-year stretch in school history with 48 victories.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE VS TEXAS TECH SECOND ROUND, NCAA TOURNAMENT DALLAS, TX; MARCH 21, 2005

STORIED CAREER COMES TO END: The loss tonight to Texas Tech marked the end of one of the greatest basketball careers in the history of Middle Tennessee women's hoops. Patrice Holmes, a three-time SBC Tournament Most Valuable Player and a two-time SBC Defensive Player of the Year award winner, ended her Lady Raider career tonight with 25 points, five rebounds, and three steals. Holmes finished her time in the Lady Raider blue sixth all-time in scoring (1,891), tied for fifth in rebounding (750), second in assists (457), first in steals (338), first in starts (124) and games played (124), seventh in blocked shots (75), and fourth in three-point field goals made (177). The Bishopville, S.C., native also finished sixth all-time in scoring and second all-time in steals in the history of the Sun Belt Conference.

HOLMES SETS MARK: Senior Patrice Holmes scored 51 points in the two NCAA Tournament games in Dallas, TX. That marks the most points in back-to-back NCAA games by a player in school history. Holmes finished her career with 78 points in four NCAA Tournament games for an impressive 19.5 points per game average.

HORTON HAS BIG NIGHT: Sophomore Krystle Horton enjoyed one of her best games of the season against the best front line the Lady Raiders have seen all year. Horton recorded her third double-double of the season with 17 points and 10 boards in 35 minutes. The Murfreesboro native's rebound total included eight on the offensive end, which went down as a season-high and matched her personal-best mark. Horton's point total of 17 against TTU was her most in a game since collecting 19 against Austin Peay on Dec. 21.

STRONG IN TEXAS: Tonight's setback to No. 14 Texas Tech was not what Middle Tennessee had in mind, but it was still an impressive run in the Lone Star state. The Lady Raiders finished with a mark of 6-1 in the state of Texas this season with a 5-0 mark in Denton and a 1-1 record in Dallas.

HOLMES CONTINUES POSTSEASON ROLL: When the lights come on in the postseason, senior Patrice Holmes puts it in another gear. In six postseason games this year, Holmes averaged 20.5 points, 5.8 rebounds, 2.8 steals, and shot 50.0 percent (50-100) from the field and 39.0 percent (16-41) from the three-point line. Holmes had nine 20-point games this year and four of them came in the last five outings.

STRONG AT THE LINE: Middle Tennessee has been proficient at the free throw line during the postseason. In six games, the Lady Raiders have made 82.1 percent (55-67) of their shots from the charity stripe, including 18-of-24 in the two NCAA Tournament games. For the season, Middle

Tennessee shot 65.7 percent at the line.

24-9: Middle Tennessee ended the 2004-05 campaign with an impressive 24-9 record. That win total equals the second most wins in a season by a Lady Raider team in school history. The most wins ever recorded were 26 by the 1982-83 squad. Also reaching the 24-win mark was the 1995-96 team and last year's 2003-04 club. The 48 wins over the past two seasons marks the most victories in a two-year span in Lady Raider history.

IN THE PAINT: Middle Tennessee had a season-low nine turnovers against Texas Tech ... The bench players for both teams combined for just six points ... The 80 points scored by TTU matched the most allowed by the Lady Raiders this season ... Texas Tech's 58.5 shooting percentage was the highest by a Middle Tennessee opponent this year ... Chrissy Givens had her 19th double figure scoring game of the year and the 20th of her career with 14 points against TTU ... The Lady Raiders dropped to 4-9 all-time in NCAA play ... Patrice Holmes' five three-pointers matched the most by a Lady Raider in an NCAA Tournament game (Sandy Brown had five against Kansas in 1988).

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