

# School record for 3-pointers lift Blue Raiders over defending national runner-up

## Lanning leads the way with eight triples

December 9, 2009 · Athletic Communications

**LOUISVILLE, Ky.** - Middle Tennessee hit a school-record 20 3-pointers, placed four players in double figures and led wire-to-wire in a 94-84 triumph at defending national runner-up Louisville Wednesday night inside Freedom Hall in Louisville, Ky. Three Blue Raiders topped the 20-point mark, while the team dished 23 assists on the 29 field goals.

Junior Anne Marie Lanning lit up the net the most, connecting on 8-of-13 from long range and added a pair of free throws to tally a career-high 26 points off the bench. Redshirt senior All-American Alysha Clark registered her fifth double-double of the campaign with 24 points, including 9-of-10 free throws, and a game-best 14 rebounds.

Senior Jackie Pickel was the other Middle Tennessee (4-3) player to reach 20 points,

scoring 20 on the strength of six triples, while also adding a pair of charity tosses. She posted at least 20 points for the second-straight game, the first time in her career she has done so. Classmate Chelsia Lymon contributed 15 points, including three treys, and nearly reached a triple-double in her return to her home state by adding eight steals and seven assists.

The 20 3-pointers broke the previous school standard of 18, set at Chattanooga February 6, 1995. The Blue Raiders had drained 11 in the first half, one shy of the MT record. Middle Tennessee's 20 long-range bombs are one shy of the Sun Belt mark, established by New Mexico State against



Louisiana in 2002.

Senior Dana Garrett also garnered the first start of her MT career, finishing with five rebounds, two points and a blocked shot.

The Blue Raiders started off the best they have all season-to-date, racing out to an 11-1 lead on the strength of 3-pointers by Clark and a pair from Brandi Brown. However, the defending national runner-up Cardinals would mount an 8-0 run, including four foul shots, to close within two before Lanning halted the spurt with another Blue Raider triple.

As Louisville did its best to close the gap in an effort to tie the contest, Middle Tennessee was able to remain ahead behind two more Lanning triples within a minute to put the team on top, 20-15, as nine minutes had elapsed. Becky Burke nailed a pair of 3-pointers herself for the Cardinals, but Pickel added MT's seventh and eighth treys of the half to push the lead back to 28-24 with six-and-a-half minutes left.

The 3-pointers continued to rain in, as Lanning added another before Lymon grabbed a three-quarter court's steal for an uncontested layup at 6:07. Pickel then knocked down her third of the half to cap an 11-0 Blue Raider run, which was eventually stopped by a Nikki Burton jumper at 5:27, pushing the lead to 36-26.

Louisville (5-3) continued to earn points at the foul line, finishing the stanza with a 13-of-18 effort, to make another run at the deficit, netting seven of the next nine points and then eventually tying the contest at 42 with a Asia Taylor triple with just over a half-minute remaining. Middle Tennessee, however, entered the locker room with a 45-42 advantage as Lanning connected on her fifth trey with 20 seconds to play.

The second half began with Gwen Rucker hitting a layup to pull the hosts within one and Taylor kept the Blue Raider margin at no larger than three with a pair of free throws at 16:21 for a 53-52 score. A pair of treys from Pickel sandwiched one by Lanning as Middle Tennessee increased its cushion back to eight, 62-54, on a 9-2 streak over the next two minutes.

The lead grew to double digits on a Lymon 3-pointer, but the Cardinals' free throws kept them in the game and Monique Reid cut the gap to six, 74-68, with 6:50 to play. However, another three by Lanning, an old-fashioned three-point play from Lymon after a steal and two free throws by Clark were part of an 8-0 MT run and the Blue Raiders seized control with a 14-point edge, 82-68, at the 6:21 mark.

Louisville would not go away quietly as Reid brought the Cards within eight, 87-79, with a free throw at 2:09. It would be the closest the margin would get the remainder of the game as Middle Tennessee was highly successful from the charity stripe down the stretch to seal the victory.

Reid paced UofL with 24 points and 10 rebounds, while Ashley Rainey added 13 points and 11 boards. Burke chipped in 15 points, including two of the squad's three 3-pointers, and Nikki Burton tacked on 12 points.

The Blue Raiders' win is their first in the four-game series with the Cardinals.

Middle Tennessee will return to action when it closes the current three-game road swing, its longest

of the campaign, at Noon Sunday when it travels to Brookings, S.D., to face South Dakota State. The Jackrabbits represent the seventh foe among the first eight games to compete in the NCAA Tournament a year ago.

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*Printed on July 28, 2014*

*Original URL: <http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/42776>*