

Brown sparks Blue Raiders to big win in Big Easy

Hits first five 3-pointers; ties Clark for team high

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NEW ORLEANS - Brandi Brown continued to find comfort inside Lakefront Arena as the Preseason First Team All-Sun Belt selection tied for game-high honors with 25 points in guiding the Middle Tennessee women's basketball team to a 102-57 victory at New Orleans Wednesday night. It marked the final game of the 2009 calendar year for the Blue Raiders, as they topped the century for the fifth time under head coach Rick Insell, winning all five.

Brown, who had set a career high with 28 points against the Lady Privateers during the regular-season meeting in the same building a year ago, began her final game in the gym by hitting her opening seven shots, including five 3-pointers, in the first half on her way to a 9-of-10 effort in the first 20 minutes to match UNO's first half total of 23.

Brown's 28 points in last year's game were keyed by nailing her first six 3-pointers, a start similar to this year's outing. She finished this contest by connecting on 10-of-13 field goals, including 5-of-6 triples for her season best.

Both teams combined to knock down the first nine 3-pointers taken, including seven by the Blue Raiders. Although nine of the team's first half buckets were from long range, Middle Tennessee (7-4, 2-0 Sun Belt) was particularly effective by handing out 17 assists on the 21 field goals as it shot a season-high 65.6 percent from the floor. The nine triples are tied for third in school history for the most in the opening period.

The defense also was vital in lifting the Blue Raiders to the win, as it forced 14 turnovers in the first half on the way to 29 overall New Orleans (6-8, 0-3 Sun Belt) miscues. MT also topped the 70-point



mark for the third-straight time against the Lady Privateers, a squad which has allowed opponents to only reach the mark seven times in the last two seasons.

New Orleans came out of the intermission by netting six of its first seven attempts. However, the quick start did not carry over much longer as the Lady Privateers were held without a point for nearly six minutes and a field goal for nearly seven as the Blue Raiders were able to extend their lead.

All-American Alysha Clark also finished with 25 points, her 37th-straight game scoring in double figures. She moves into sole possession of second place in school history on the list, eclipsing the 36 by Kim Webb (1984-87) and Sherry Tucker (1992-95). The school record is held by Tawanya Mucker (1986-89), who registered 60 consecutive as a Blue Raider.

Senior Jackie Pickel hauled in a career-high 10 rebounds, tying for game-best honors with the Lady Privateers Juanita Cochran. Chelsia Lymon and Anne Marie Lanning also reached double figures with 12 and 11 points, respectively.

Middle Tennessee also received points from three of the four freshmen who played, including the first points of Jamila Ajanaku's career and a career-best six from Icelyn Elie.

New Orleans was led by a dozen by Amanda McCarthy, while Talisha Bridges chipped in 11 and Tiffina' Bennett added 10.

The Blue Raiders will resume their season at 2 p.m. Sunday when they plays host to Louisiana inside the Murphy Center for the first game of the 2010 calendar year.

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