

Blue Raiders Defeat ECU 77-66; Win Third Straight

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee women's basketball (3-1) won its third consecutive game with a 77-66 win over Eastern Kentucky (0-4) Saturday in the final game of the Middle Tennessee Classic in the Murphy Center.

Junior guard Chrissy Givens continued her stellar performance as her 30 points against the Colonels broke a career-high of 23, which she set the night before against Georgia Southern. The Monroe, Louisiana native was 12-of-22 from the field and also recorded a career-high nine steals.

Middle Tennessee opened the game with a 5-0 run to take the early lead, but Eastern Kentucky fought back and earned one of two ties in the game at 18 with 9:18 left in the first half. Senior Tia Stovall

gave the lead back to Middle Tennessee with a pair of free throws giving the Blue Raiders a 20-18 advantage. The Blue Raiders proceeded to put together a 21-11 run in the final nine minutes of the half to take a 29-39 lead into the locker room.

In the first six minutes of the second half, Middle Tennessee built a 13 point lead thanks to a pair of jumpers and three free throws from Givens. Middle Tennessee saw its lead shrink to six, it's lowest of the half, with a 5-0 run by Eastern Kentucky that started with a three pointer by Ashley Cazeem.

In the final eight minutes of the game, Middle Tennessee hit key buckets in critical moments to quell the momentum of Eastern Kentucky. With four minutes to go, and the Blue Raiders lead cut to seven, 65-58, Middle Tennessee's Krystle Horton hit a lay-up to expand the lead to nine. A steal by



Givens gave the ball back to Middle Tennessee and Monique Martin hit a jumper with 3:52 left to give Middle Tennessee an 11 point lead.

Eastern Kentucky continued to fight back, and with 3:28 left, Laura Shelton hit a pair of free throws to cut the lead back to nine. Middle Tennessee answered again, as Martin hit a jumper to push the lead back to 11. Eastern Kentucky's Jayme Thiem hit a three-point shot with 32 seconds remaining and then the Colonels fouled Givens, who hit 1-of-2 free throws. Martin was also fouled with 20 seconds remaining and hit 1-of-2 free throws to give the Blue Raiders an 11 point win.

Middle Tennessee made Eastern Kentucky pay for almost every one of the Colonels' 25 turnovers in the game. The Blue Raiders scored 30 points off EKU turnovers and also scored 32 points in the paint.

Martin's 15 points was the second consecutive night the guard recorded a career-high. Horton was second on the team in scoring with 18 and it was also the fourth consecutive game the forward scored in double figures. Stovall pulled down 10 of the Blue Raider's 35 rebounds for her first double figure rebounding effort of the season.

Middle Tennessee closes out its four-game home stretch on Wednesday November 30 at 7 p.m. when the Blue Raiders host No. 11 Georgia. All tickets will be \$1.

NOTES:

GIVENS BESTS HERSELF: Junior guard Chrissy Givens recorded another career-high performance. The Monroe, Louisiana native had 30 points against Eastern Kentucky, besting her previous career-best of 23 which she set the night before against Georgia Southern. Givens' 30 points is the first time a Blue Raider player has scored 30 or more points since Patrice Holmes recorded 31 against Tennessee State on December 15, 2003. Givens' nine steals is also a career-high and ties the school record for steals in a game with Sherry Tucker who recorded that mark on February 2, 1995 against Austin Peay.

STOVALL MOVES UP: With nine points against Eastern Kentucky, senior forward Tia Stovall moves up to 16th place in the 1,000 point club. She now has 1,062 and needs just four points to overtake 15th place.

TIDBITS: Monique Martin broke her own career-high with 15 points against Eastern Kentucky ... Middle Tennessee opens the year 3-1 for the first time since the 2003-04 season ... The Blue Raiders led at the half for the third consecutive game ... The Blue Raiders shot a season-high 49.2 percent from the field ... For the second consecutive game LaCondra Mason hit at least one three-pointer for the Blue Raiders ... Middle Tennessee lost the battle of the boards for the second straight game as Eastern Kentucky had 37 to the Blue Raiders 35.

HEAD COACH RICK INSELL:

About the team's effort to win over Eastern Kentucky: "What a valiant effort by Chrissy [Givens], to get 30 points, Tia Stovall had 9 points and 10 rebounds, and Krystle Horton had 35 minutes. These three have set the precedent for the rest of the team. Anytime they (Eastern Kentucky) got any momentum, Chrissy took it right out of them."

About Chrissy Givens' having another career night: "Chrissy had to score for us tonight, tomorrow she may have to defend, the next night she may have to crash the boards. Tonight, we needed her to score baskets, and I don't expect anything less than that. She's such a great athlete and an inspiration for the rest of the team."

About Wednesday night's contest versus Georgia: "We felt like going into this game, they would prepare us for the Georgia game because Eastern Kentucky has a guard oriented team. Georgia has a very good team and we need to contend with those guards in order to win."

GUARD CHRISSY GIVENS:

On scoring another career high: "I had to take what they gave me, and if we are going to set a precedent for the younger players, we are going to have to knock down chip shots. I knew they were going to come; I just had to be patient." FORWARD

KYRSTLE HORTON:

On Eastern Kentucky's tough style of play: "We felt like we weren't playing up to our potential. They weren't going to give up, and neither were we. We just had to keep fighting and we knew we would eventually find open shots."

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