Shorthanded Blue Raiders Defeat Georgia State 69-51

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Middle Tennessee (5-3) dressed just eight players against Georgia State (1-3) but the Blue Raiders played stellar defense, which aided in the squad's 69-51 win over the Panthers Thursday night in the Murphy Center.

The Blue Raiders were without the services of junior forward Krytle Horton who was out due to an injury. With her absence, sophomore forward Lakira Boyd picked up the first start of her career and played a career-high 33 minutes.

Middle Tennessee jumped out early on the Panthers and never let up as the team went on a 15-4 run in the first seven minutes of the game. The Blue Raiders shot a scorching 50 percent from the field and picked up nine of their 14 total steals in the first half, scoring 21 points off Georgia State's 14 turnovers.

For the game, Middle



Tennessee shot 42.4 percent from the field and committed a season-low 10 turnovers. The Blue Raiders forced 23 Georgia State turnovers and gave up just seven steals.

Senior forward Tia Stovall led all scorers with 21 points and overall had a solid night. The Estill Springs, Tenn. native also pulled down seven rebounds, had four assists and four steals.

Chrissy Givens continued her streak of consecutive games scoring 20 or more points, but it took most of the game to do it. The junior guard had 18 points with a little over three minutes remaining

and preserved her streak when she hit a jumper with 3:06 remaining for her 20th point of the night.

Middle Tennessee will take a 10-day break, for final exams, before the team returns to action on December 18 at the UAB Tournament. The Blue Raiders will face Penn State in the opening round.

NOTES:

STOVALL STEPS UP: With Krystle Horton out with an injury, senior Tia Stovall stepped up and had her best offensive game of the year in the win over Georgia State. Stovall recorded her first 20-point game of the year by pouring in a game-high 21 points on 9 of 11 shooting to lead the charge. It marked Stovall's 10th career game of scoring 20 or more points and her first since notching 21 points against Western Kentucky last season on the road.

PLAYER OF THE GAME: Tia Stovall was voted the Alexander Automotive Family Player of the Game against Georgia State by members of the working media.

CAREER GAME FOR BOYD: Sophomore Lakira Boyd, who made her first collegiate start tonight, enjoyed a career game for the Blue Raiders. Boyd scored a personal-best nine points while ripping down a career-high six rebounds. The Memphis, Tenn., native also played a career-best 32 minutes and matched her top steals total with two.

STREAK CONTINUES: Junior Chrissy Givens continued her torrid streak of scoring 20 or more points after tallying 20 in the win over Georgia State. Givens, who entered the 2005-06 season without reaching the 20-point plateau, has now topped that mark in six straight games.

TAKING CARE OF THE ROCK: A key to tonight's win over visiting Georgia State came in the turnover department. While the Blue Raiders forced 23 miscues, they turned it over a season-low 10 times. Middle Tennessee's previous low this year was 15 turnovers against Georgia Southern.

TIDBITS: Freshman Johnna Abney attempted a career-high 10 three-pointers ... Tia Stovall dished out a season-high four assists ... Head Coach Rick Insell is now 4-1 at home ... Monique Martin pulled down a career-best six rebounds ... Tia Stovall and Chrissy Givens did not leave the floor tonight as both played all 40 minutes ... The Blue Raiders only had eight players available for tonight's game and seven of the eight scored.

QUOTES:

HEAD COACH RICK INSELL: "We take a lot of pride in our defense and we have a lot of lateral quickness and we try and take advantage of it. Leadership from players like Tia Stovall and Chrissy Givens makes all the rest of the players much better in the game. We knew we were shorthanded tonight at the post but Lakira Boyd and Brittany Pittman did a good job. Brittany is a freshman and you could tell she was scared to death, but she was in there battling."

TIA STOVALL'S PERFORMANCE IN THE FIRST HALF: "We got stale in our zone offense in the first half. When we started putting the ball into Tia in the middle she made things happen."

"We just got up the line and got after them early and that was the difference in the ball game. I think Georgia State was a little unsure when we did that. We've got a pretty good defensive ball club at times, but tonight we were able to get our hands in the lanes and get some deflections."

FORWARD TIA STOVALL: "I think everyone on the team knew that when Krystle [Horton] went down we were going to need all eight players and all the post players knew we were going to have to step up because we were down to just three post players. Stepping up would be playing smart, hitting the easy baskets and looking for our inside outs when they were doubling down on us."

GUARD CHRISSY GIVENS: "We knew coming in that Georgia State would be very athletic. This would be a good chance for us to working on boxing out because we knew we couldn't jump with them. This was a tough game for us tonight, and with Krystle out, we knew everyone was going to have to bring their "A" game. When we came out we were fiery. The first five minutes, I believe, set the tone for the rest of the game."

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