Blue Raiders Stun Penn State 79-65 in Blazer Tournament

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. - Middle Tennessee women's basketball (6-3) hit 22-of-26 free throws in the second half to help propel the Blue Raiders to an impressive 79-65 win over Penn State (4-5) Sunday in the UAB Blazer Tournament.

For the game, Middle Tennessee hit a season-high 30-of-38 free throws in the game. The Blue Raiders battled foul trouble all night as five players had four fouls for the squad. Penn State had three of its players foul out in the game including Adrienne Squire who led the Lady Lions with 19 points and was 12-of-12 from the free throw line.

Middle Tennessee rode the arm of its youngsters in the first half hitting key long-range shots at opportune moments. The first three-point bomb came with 7:02 remaining when freshman Johnna Abney hit a trey to tie the score at 21. In the final two minutes of the game sophomore Latoya Barclay and freshman LaCondra Mason each hit 3-pointers to keep the game close as the Blue Raiders entered the locker room down by one 34-33.

Tia Stovall's lay-up to start the second half gave the Blue Raiders the lead and began a see-saw game for the first three minutes of the game. Penn State built a three-point lead early in the second half thanks to a jumper by Kamela Gissendanner. Back-to-back jumpers by Stovall gave the Blue Raiders their third lead of the second half and the squad never trailed in the game again.

Middle Tennessee went on a 24-to-14 run in the span of 10 minutes to give the Blue Raiders an 11-point lead. The lead was expanded thanks to a technical foul on Penn State Head Coach Rene Portland allowing Barclay to hit a pair of free throws and push the score to 65-54.

Penn State cut the lead back down to eight twice in the final four minutes of the game but Middle Tennessee hit the clutch shots when the Blue Raiders needed them. In those final four minutes,

Middle Tennessee was 7-of-9 from the free throw line to stave off a Lady Lions threat.

Middle Tennessee was relentless on the boards as the Blue Raiders snagged 35 rebounds, 18 offensive and 17 defensive. The Blue Raiders had 15 steals in the game and gave up just two to Penn State.

Stovall led all scorers in the game with 21 points. The senior forward also had a season-high three blocks, pulled down eight rebounds, dished out three assists and had four steals.

Junior guard Chrissy Givens had her streak broken of consecutive games of scoring 20 or more points, but she did pour in 19. She also had eight rebounds, eight assists, four steals and committed just one turnover. Barclay scored a season-high 11 points in the game and was 6-of-6 from the free throw line.

The game also saw the return of Starr Orr after sitting out the fall semester. The sophomore guard made her presence known as she played 21 minutes, scored six points, had two big steals and was 2-of-2 from the free throw line.

Middle Tennessee will play host UAB at 6 p.m. in the Championship game of the UAB Blazer Tournament.

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