Blue Raiders Pick Up Decisive 74-46 Win over Tennessee Tech

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee women's basketball (7-4) closed out its last home game of 2005 with a decisive 74-46 win over in-state rival Tennessee Tech (7-3) Wednesday in the Murphy Center.

Middle Tennessee's slow start to begin the game became a fast-paced finish for the Blue Raiders. The squad spotted Tennessee Tech the first four points of the game but the Golden Eagle's lead didn't last long. Middle Tennessee scored six straight points, thanks to a jumper by Krystle Horton and back-to-back jumpers by Tia Stovall which gave the Blue Raiders the lead and the team never looked back.

Tennessee Tech was held scoreless for the final six minutes of the first half allowing Middle Tennessee to build an 18 point lead going into the locker room. The Blue Raiders came out in the second half and scored the first five points of the game, setting a tone for the rest of the contest.

Middle Tennessee was handcuffed early in the second half when Stovall was tagged with three fouls in the first five minutes giving her four for the game. Head Coach Rick Insell had to go to his bench and rely on sophomore forward Lakira Boyd, who answered the call with seven points and played 23 minutes.

For the game, Middle Tennessee shot 50 percent from the field and shot a scorching 66.7 percent in

the second half. The Blue Raiders held Tennessee Tech to an anemic 31.6 percent from the field and forced 28 Golden Eagle turnovers.

The Blue Raiders had to play on thin ice as five players accumulated four fouls through the course of the second half. Freshman Brittany Pittman came into the game for the final five minutes and played quality minutes for the squad, as had one steal and recorded one block.

Junior Chrissy Givens led all scorers with 23 points and also had eight rebounds and five steals. Latoya Barclay added 10 points for the Blue Raiders.

Middle Tennessee returns to action on Wednesday December 28 when the Blue Raiders travel to Austin Peay. Tip-off is set for 7 p.m.

NOTES:

TIDBITS: Middle Tennessee's 28-point margin of victory over Tennessee Tech was the largest this season ... Sophomore Starr Orr started the first game of her career against Tennessee Tech ... Johnna Abney has hit at least one three-pointer in her last five games ... Chrissy Givens has scored 20 or more points in eight of her last nine games ... Head Coach Rick Insell picked up his first win over an in-state opponent with the victory over Tennessee Tech ... Lakira Boyd connected on the first three-pointer of the season tonight against Tennessee Tech ... Latoya Barclay has scored in double figures two out of her last three games, and connected on a career-high two three-pointers.

QUOTES:

HEAD COACH RICK INSELL: About creating a big lead at the half over Tennessee Tech: "We got up into them defensively because of our agile quickness. If we are able to get up on people and are able to create openings, we can present some challenges. We had great defensive pressure and a good offensive effort and it propelled us to victory this evening."

About scoring off of rebounds: "We were able to use our quickness to go to the board, which allowed us to score some easy baskets."

About winning over Tennessee Tech after a difficult loss to UAB: "We have been thrown some challenges this season. After yesterday's tough practice, I think we became more of a team. We shouldn't have lost to UAB. We needed to come back tonight and have this type of win."

About jumping off to an early 5-0 run in the second half: We caused them [Tennessee Tech] to make a couple of broken plays. Chrissy made some key baskets to help us jump off to a good start in the second half.

JUNIOR GUARD CHRISSY GIVENS:

About practicing six hours yesterday after a tough loss to UAB: "It was awful. We knew we had it coming. It wasn't really anything physical. We had to get our heads right. They [the coaching staff] said some stuff that needed to be said. It was bad that it was long, but tiring in a good way."

Thoughts on coming back in the win column after Monday's difficult loss: "It means a lot to come back and win this game. Our goal for the players that have returned from last year was to beat every team that defeated us last season and show them that we wanted revenge."

On the importance of winning tonight's game: "This was a gut check. We lost to UAB by two, and coming back to play a good team like Tennessee Tech, was a good boast of confidence."

FRESHMAN GUARD JOHNNA ABNEY:

About playing against the zone defense: "We shot the ball well tonight. Our offense is more man to man sets rather than the zone. However, if they are going to play the zone, then we have our shooters from the perimeter that can help us win."

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