

Blue Raiders Earn Sun Belt Weekend Sweep in Win over Troy

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee women's basketball (11-7, 4-1 SBC) earned its first Sun Belt weekend sweep of the season with its 91-60 win over Troy University (7-9, 1-4 SBC) Saturday in the Murphy Center.

- **Photos:** [MT vs. Troy Gallery](#)

Chrissy Givens and Johnna Abney helped the Blue Raiders to a fast start as the duo combined for seven of the eight three-pointers the team hit in the first half. Middle Tennessee connected on a season-high 10 three-pointers for the game.

Leading 17-10 with 14:05 remaining in the half, the Blue Raiders went on a 42-18 run to head into the locker room with a commanding 59-28 lead. The 59 points is the most the Blue Raiders have scored in a half this season. The Blue Raiders also had just two turnovers at the half.



The Blue Raiders shot a scorching 51.2 percent from the field in the first half and ended the game shooting 46.6 percent. Middle Tennessee was just as effective on the other end of the court with its stifling defense. The team committed a season-low eight turnovers in the game and forced 25 Troy miscues.

Middle Tennessee also won the battle of the boards, out-rebounding Troy 36 to 29 and limiting the Lady Trojans to just four offensive boards. The Blue Raiders also had 15 steals in the game and gave up just one to Troy.

Givens led all scorers with 27 points, which is the 11th time this season the junior guard has scored 20 or more points. Abney ended the night by scoring a career-high 20 points and hitting a career-high six three-pointers. Tia Stovall added 10 points and also had four assists.

Middle Tennessee hosts Louisiana-Lafayette at 5 p.m. on Thursday in a double-header with the men.

NOTES:

GOOD START: With Middle Tennessee's win over Troy on Saturday the Blue Raiders improved to 4-1 in Sun Belt Conference action. That record goes down as the second-best start by MT in SBC play in the six years it has competed in the league. The best start in SBC play was last year's 6-0 mark to begin conference action.

SBC STREAK CONTINUES: The win over Troy tonight extended the Blue Raiders SBC home winning streak to 12 straight games. The last time Middle Tennessee lost a conference game at the Murphy Center was on Feb. 5, 2004 in double overtime against Western Kentucky.

OFFENSIVE EXPLOSION: Middle Tennessee turned in its best offensive showing of the year by scoring 91 points, connecting on a season-high 10 three-pointers, and won the offensive rebounding war 17-4. The 91 points tonight were the most by a Blue Raider team since Dec. 2, 2002 when MT defeated East Tennessee, 95-70.

GIVENS OVER 20 ... AGAIN: Junior Chrissy Givens continued her torrid offensive scoring on Saturday night with 27 points and three three-pointers in the win over Troy. It marked the 11th time this season Givens has topped the 20-point mark and the seventh straight time at home.

ABNEY SETS PERSONAL MARK: Freshman Johnna Abney set a career-high with 20 points in the win over Troy. Abney equaled her career-high with 14 of her points coming in the first half on a perfect 5-for-5 shooting before finishing 7 of 10 from the field. Abney, who has hit at least one three-pointer in 12 straight games and connected on a personal-best six treys against Troy, has now scored in double figures four times this season.

PLAYER OF THE GAME: Johnna Abney was voted the Alexander Automotive Family Player of the Game against Troy by members of the working media.

TIDBITS: Middle Tennessee committed just eight turnovers in the win over Troy which is the fewest in a game since joining the Sun Belt Conference (school record is two set against Vanderbilt in 1979) ... Middle Tennessee is now 3-0 all-time against Troy ... The Blue Raiders' 59 first half points against the Trojans are the most in half this season (school record is 68 set

against Fairleigh Dickinson in 1994) ... The Blue Raiders dished out a season-high 20 assists on 34 total field goals ... Tia Stovall matched her season-high with four assists.

QUOTES:

HEAD COACH RICK INSELL:

Opening Statement: "We came out focused tonight. We played our second game in a row in which our team was coachable. We played hard the other night, which made us coachable, and that's why we won at South Alabama. Our goal was to cut down on turnovers; we only turned the ball over eight times tonight, which allowed for us to have a good game."

About making some key baskets throughout the game: "I am convinced we are a good shooting team. They [Troy] has a better team than the showed tonight, they may be a little weary from playing great teams like Western [Kentucky] the other night. Playing tough teams like Western Kentucky and Middle Tennessee is pretty tough on anybody."

About focusing on certain aspects of the game to secure a win over Troy: "We didn't want to play the score board or the team; we wanted to play the game, which was our biggest goal tonight. We wanted to play our defense and work on our press sets. We weren't trying to run up the score, we were trying to focus on playing the game."

Thoughts on out rebounding Troy 36 to 29: "We went to the boards hard. We are very athletic; we got to use that to our advantage. We got lateral quickness, which helps you compete against teams that may have a slight height advantage."

FRESHMAN GUARD JOHNNA ABNEY:

Thoughts on tonight's home win over Troy: "We've been on the road for the past few games, and we were very excited to be home. We came out ready to play."

JUNIOR GUARD CHRISSY GIVENS:

About getting a big lead early: "We hadn't been home for few games, which got us pumped up to play in front of the home crowd. Johnna [Abney] came out and lit it up. I never seen anybody shoot the way she did tonight."

About having a big lead at halftime and preventing a let-down in the second-half: "Being coachable as coach stated earlier is not playing the scoreboard or playing Troy, but playing Middle Tennessee basketball, and working on correcting our mistakes."

Thoughts on improving shooting percentage during the past few games: "We've done so much shooting. I never shot this much in my life. The past couple of games we have shot the ball well."