

Blue Raiders fall on road to Yellow Jackets

Second of a three-game road swing for MT

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ATLANTA – Middle

Tennessee hung close for the majority of the game, but Georgia Tech dominated the rebounding battle to pull away late and post a 68-48 triumph over the Blue Raiders Friday evening inside Alexander Memorial Coliseum in Atlanta. It marked the first meeting between the two schools.

Freshman Ebony Rowe was the lone Middle Tennessee player to reach double figures, scoring 10 points on 4-of-8 field goals and hauling in a team-best five rebounds with two assists and two steals in 36 minutes. Fellow rookie KeKe Stewart matched her shooting from the field for eight points, while senior Anne Marie Lanning and sophomore Kortni Jones also registered eight for the Blue Raiders.

Middle Tennessee's freshmen Janay Brinkley and Laken Leonard saw the most extensive action of their young collegiate careers with Leonard grabbing a pair of steals.



Georgia Tech was led by a double-double from Alex Montgomery, who led all players with 16 points and 10 caroms. Her work on the boards helped the Jackets win the rebounding battle, 41-23. Tyuanna Marshall chipped in 13 points, 11 of which came during the second half.

The Yellow Jackets scored the game's first two buckets before the Blue Raiders responded with a 7-0 run, capped by a 25-foot 3-pointer from Jones to take a 7-4 advantage at 15:48. After Rowe extended the surge to nine, Georgia Tech answered by scoring the next nine points, including a trey from Metra Walthour and back-to-back jumpers in the lane from LaQuananisha Adams to build a 13-

9 edge with 11:20 to play.

Marshall gave the Jackets their next points, capitalizing on a short jumper after Lanning slipped after grabbing a defensive rebound. Lanning, however, did not let the miscue deter her from pouring in a 3-pointer of her own just 18 seconds later. The two teams then traded baskets, MT's coming on a turnaround seven-footer from KeKe Stewart, to make it a three-point difference, 17-14, with 7:54 left.

The next four Georgia Tech (6-4) points came courtesy of the foul line, as Walthour and Chelsea Regins each made the most of their opportunities, helping build a 21-16 edge. Two Blue Raider charity tosses, one each by Rowe and sophomore Dymon Raynor, and an off-balanced jumper by Jones would be all they could muster the remaining of the half, while a pair of Sasha Goodlett assisted in the Yellow Jackets heading into the locker rooms with a 29-20 halftime lead.

By the first media timeout of the second half, at 15:58, Middle Tennessee (5-2) cut the deficit to five, 38-33, on the strength of two 3-pointers by Tina Stewart and another from Lanning. Montgomery and Adams pushed margin to nine, 42-33, before sophomore Icelyn Elie kept the Blue Raiders within the same gap at 12:41.

Jones hit a 3-pointer at 12:15, trimming the margin to eight, 46-38, but Marshall answered with the back-end of a two-shot foul and a jumper to push it back to 11, 49-38, with 11:33 to go. Again, the advantage was cut to eight, 49-41, as Jones located Rowe for an old-fashioned three-point play on the next Middle Tennessee possession.

The lead remained in single digits at nine, 53-44, when Tina Stewart hit a free throw after a steal, but Georgia Tech inched its edge back to 14, 58-44, on a Montgomery triple and a pair of Deja Foster charity tosses within the next minute.

It remained a 14-point game following a Marshall layup at 3:10 to make it 62-48. The Blue Raiders were unable to mount any scoring down the stretch and the Yellow Jackets decided the final outcome on two field goals and a pair of free throws.

Middle Tennessee will close its current three-game road trip by heading to Orlando for an 11 a.m. Central tip against UCF in a rematch of last year's season opener. The game can be heard on the Blue Raider Network, WGNS (100.5 FM, 101.9 FM, 1450 AM), WMOT (89.5 FM) and WBRY (96.7 FM, 1540 AM) with Dick Palmer on the call.

The Blue Raiders then return home for the first of two home games during the month, facing current No. 4 and Elite Eight participant Xavier at 7 p.m. Thursday.

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