

Blue Raiders win battle in hard-fought game against Bonnies

MT begins UTSA Holiday Classic with victory

December 20, 2010 · Athletic Communications

SAN ANTONIO – Middle Tennessee made the most of its opportunities down the stretch to outlast St. Bonaventure in a tight 40-minute battle, 58-53, Monday afternoon in the first game of the UTSA Holiday Classic in San Antonio. The Blue Raiders capitalized on a pair of screwy foul situations to take the lead with just under nine minutes to play and never look back.

Trailing by four after a three-point play from Jennie Ashton at 11:07, freshman Ebony Rowe counted with one of her own just under a minute later, at 10:10, to again make it one-point game, 45-44 in favor of St. Bonaventure. Junior Tina Stewart then intercepted a backcourt pass and was fouled. In what should have been the Bonnies' seventh team foul and sending MT to a one-and-one situation was originally booked as only the team's sixth infraction.

Play continued and Middle Tennessee forced another SBU foul before the referees huddled and corrected the mistake. The result was four Blue Raider charity tosses, two each by Stewart and sophomore Icelyn Elie. However, MT was only able to convert one-half of its attempts to go-ahead, 46-45.

The Blue Raiders used the momentum to continue pushing on the offensive end and Rowe buried a



jumper at 7:55 to extend the margin to three, 48-45, at the next media dead ball. A pair of Anne Marie Lanning free throws pushed it to five before Megan Van Tatenhove stopped a near-five minute lull and kept Bona within three, 50-47, at 6:37.

It would be almost three minutes before either side scored again, but Armelia Horton's free throws cut the gap to one, 50-49, with 3:58 remaining on the back side of the final media timeout. Freshman KeKe Stewart pushed the lead back to four with a free throw and jumper but Van Tatenhove answered and cut it back to a deuce, 53-51, with just 1:46 to play.

Middle Tennessee then drew up an in-bounds play to Lanning following a timeout and the senior Preseason All-Sun Belt selection hit the running jumper to make it a two-possession game with 22 seconds left. The Bonnies were forced to foul down the stretch, but Lanning's pair with 1.7 seconds remaining iced the contest.

Rowe finished with her fourth double-double of her career with team-high totals of 16 points and 11 rebounds, including nine on the defensive glass. KeKe Stewart added 11 points and Tina Stewart contributed eight points.

Van Tatenhove paced St. Bonaventure with a game-best 21 points, while sharing team-high rebounding honors with Alaina Walker with seven.

The Blue Raiders won the rebounding war, 33-29, including 11 on the offensive boards. They also committed a season-low 13 turnovers, while forcing 15 SBU miscues.

The first half featured both teams trading the lead and neither opening more than a four-point cushion. Freshman Jordyn Luffman buried a corner 3-pointer to begin the scoring, but Jessica Jenkins answered on the next Bonnie possession. A pair of Rowe jumpers in the lane pushed the MT advantage to four, 7-3, during the next four minutes before Van Tatenhove halted the spurt with another SBU triple at 15:33.

The score remained close and was tied at 12-12 at the under-12 minute timeout following a trey by Bona's Cara Gustafson. Despite a near-three minute scoring drought, the Blue Raiders played solid defense and only allowed St. Bonaventure (8-4) a two-point edge, 17-15, following a made free throw by sophomore Icelyn Elie at 8:54. Elie then tied the game at 17 apiece before Gustafson buried her second 3-pointer of the half just 17 seconds later to put SBU back on top, 20-17.

Sophomore Kortni Jones countered with her own triple, tying it once more, before Van Tatenhove netted four of the Bonnies' eight points down the stretch to send St. Bonaventure into the locker room ahead, 28-24.

The margin quickly swelled to eight, 32-24, early in the second half behind a pair of Van Tatenhove jumpers within the first minute. However, a pair of charity tosses from redshirt freshman Lauren March and a turnaround fadeaway by KeKe Stewart cut the deficit back to four.

An old-fashioned three-point play from Van Tatenhove made it a seven-point difference before junior Tina Stewart answered for Middle Tennessee (7-3) and kept the Blue Raiders within four. Rowe and KeKe Stewart then hit back-to-back inside jumpers to trim the gap to two, 37-35. Rowe hit another bucket to knot the score before Horton tallied another old-fashioned three-point play near the end of the shot clock to give SBU a slim edge.

Middle Tennessee will conclude action in the UTSA Holiday Classic at 5 p.m. Tuesday when it faces Big 12 foe Kansas State inside the UTSA Convocation Center.

Printed on July 24, 2014

Original URL: <http://www.gblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/50044>