Blue Raiders drop NCAA Tournament game to Bulldogs

Lanning concludes career with team-high 15 points

March 20, 2011 · Athletic Communications

AUBURN, Ala. - Middle Tennessee could never get into an offensive rhythm and a stifling Georgia defense limited the Blue Raiders to a season-low point total, as the Bulldogs captured a 56-41 victory in NCAA Tournament First Round action Sunday evening inside the Auburn Arena in Auburn, Ala.

Middle Tennessee (23-8) ends its season by struggling from the field, shooting just 16-of-56 (28.6 percent), including only 3-of-20 (15.0 percent) from behind the 3-point arc. Senior Anne Marie Lanning paced the Blue Raiders with 15 points, including a pair of triples, in her final collegiate game. She finishes her career ranked 19th in school history with 1,183 points and third with 243 career 3-pointers.

Freshman Ebony Rowe added 10 points, all in the second half, to extend her double-digit scoring streak to 28 games. The pair each grabbed five rebounds, two shy of sophomore Kortni Jones' team-best seven.

Three Georgia (22-10) players reached double-figure points, including a game-high 18 from Jasmine James. Eight of her points came at the foul line, topping the MT team total by two. Jasmine Hassell and Porsha Phillips contributed 11 and 10 points, respectively. Phillips hauled in a game-best 14 rebounds, including 10 on the defensive glass.

The Bulldogs knocked down 21-of-44 (47.7 percent) of her field goals and added 13-of-18 (72.2

percent) at the foul line.

The two teams traded baskets to start the game before Georgia opened a six-point edge, 12-6, at 14:27 on a James steal and layup. Jones cut the deficit in half with a 3-pointer at 12:55, breaking an over three-minute drought, and then KeKe Stewart pulled Middle Tennessee within one, 12-11, just 52 seconds later.

Anne Marie Armstrong hit the front-end of a two-shot foul opportunity to make it a two-point difference, but Lanning nailed a jumper at 8:18 to force the third tie of the opening period. Sophomore Icelyn Elie tallied a layup on the next Blue Raider possession, giving MT its first advantage, 15-13, since she scored to make it 2-0.

The Bulldogs then rattled off 11 consecutive points and would never look back. Georgia capped its surge with five straight by Armstrong before Lanning ended the dry spell at 1:28 with another trey to make it just a six-point deficit, 24-18. Each team scored once more before the half and MT went into the intermission down just a half dozen, 26-20.

Another cold shooting period by the Blue Raiders allowed the Bulldogs to open a 14-point cushion, 34-20, during the first seven minutes of the second half. Georgia netted the stanza's opening eight points, capped by an old-fashioned three-point play by Hassell. Again, Lanning hit the shot to break the drought, burying another trey at 12:23 for Middle Tennessee's first points of the half.

During the next five minutes, the Bulldogs pushed their edge to a game-high 19, 46-27, with 7:30 to play. The Blue Raiders trimmed the gap back to a dozen with a 9-2 spurt, covering the next three minutes. Lanning hit a pair of free throws at 2:35 to make it an 11-point game, 50-39, but Middle Tennessee would get no closer the remainder of the contest.

The Blue Raiders conclude their 14th NCAA Tournament appearance in school history with the setback, while Georgia advance to face No. 3 seed Florida State in Tuesday's Second Round.

Printed on June 20, 2013
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/52135