

Conference opener on tap for Blue Raiders

MT set to begin 12th Sun Belt campaign

December 20, 2011 · Athletic Communications

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. –

Middle Tennessee women's basketball will open its 12th season as a member of the Sun Belt Conference by playing host to FIU at 7 p.m. Wednesday in the league opener inside historic Murphy Center.



The Blue Raiders bring a 7-5 record into the meeting after defeating Tennessee State

Sunday, 94-53. Four players reached double-figure scoring, including a trio of Kortni Jones (24 points), Ebony Rowe (21) and Icelyn Elie (20) above the 20-point plateau for the first time since January 2010. Elie added 10 rebounds for her third double-double of the season and sixth of her career.

Freshman Shanice Cason rounded out the quartet with a career-high 14 points to go along with her seven assists and zero turnovers. She has combined with Jones to post 58 assists and an over 2-to-1 assist-to-turnover ratio in December.

Sunday's output resulted in a season-high scoring effort, as Middle Tennessee knocked down a season-best 56.9 percent of its field goals and tallied 47 points in each half.

FIU, under the direction of 33rd-year head coach Cindy Russo, improved to 7-4 overall this season after back-to-back wins against Jacksonville State and Delaware State at the North Florida-hosted Comfort Inn Holiday Classic in Jacksonville, Fla.

The Panthers have won five of their last six games with the lone setback coming in their Sun Belt opener, dropping a 65-48 decision at Western Kentucky Dec. 11.

Jerica Coley paces FIU with 25.0 points per game, including 32 in the loss to the Lady Toppers, while Fanni Hutlassa gives the Panthers a pair in double-figure scoring with 12.9 per game. Coley, a guard, is also the team's top rebounder with a 7.7 average.

The Blue Raiders lead the all-time series, 14-8, with wins in five of the last six meetings. The lone FIU victory came a year ago in Miami, as it escaped with a 62-59 triumph. However, MT bounced back with a 66-52 home win later in the year as part of the annual WBCA Pink Zone initiative.

The game can be heard on WMOT only Wednesday night due to a conflict with the men's

basketball team at Mississippi. Dick Palmer and Duane Hickey will call the action on 89.5 FM.

Printed on July 31, 2014

Original URL: <http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/57429>