Sun Belt action opens Saturday for Raiders

MT visits Louisiana in Noon tipoff

November 23, 2012 · @MTAthletics

The Middle Tennessee women's basketball team partakes in its earliest conference game in school history on Saturday, Nov. 24 when the Blue Raiders visit Louisiana. Tipoff is set for Noon at Earl K. Long Gym in Lafayette.

GAME INFORMATION

Opponent: Louisiana Ragin' Cajuns (2-2)
Date: Saturday, Nov. 24, 2012

Time: 12:00 p.m.
Location: Lafayette, La.
Arena: Earl K. Long Gym (1,121)

SERIES INFORMATION

Overall: MT leads series, 17-0Last Meeting: MT 104, UL 53 - Jan. 7, 2012 - Murfreesboro, Tenn.
Under Rick Insell: 9-0

MEDIA INFORMATION

Live Webstream: RaginCajuns.com
Radio: WMOT (89.5 FM)
Play-by-Play: Dick Palmer

QUICK HITTERS

• For the first time since 1997, Middle Tennessee played in back-to-back overtime games. The Blue Raiders edged in-state rival Tennessee Tech, 65-59 in OT, to improve to 3-1 this season.
• Kortni Jones registered season-bests with 24 points and five rebounds, shooting 9-of-18 from the field. Ebony Rowe and Icelyn Elie also contributed 12 points each in the victory.
• Saturday's conference opener is the earliest in school history for Middle Tennessee since women's basketball became a scholarship sport in 1975. The previous early conference start date was Dec. 5, 1997 when the Blue Raiders opened the OVC season with rival Tennessee Tech.

•The Raiders have three players averaging double figures, all of which were preseason first team All-Sun Belt selections. Ebony Rowe leads the way with 19.5 ppg, followed by Kortni Jones with 18.5. Icelyn Elie has averaged 15.0 ppg and 7.5 rpg in four contests played this season.

NOTES

Opening the Sun Belt • Coach Rick Insell is a remarkable 106-12 against Sun Belt competition in the regular season.
• His win total ranks fifth in SBC history and his winning percentage (.898) is second all-time behind Louisiana Tech's Leon Barmore.
• The Blue Raiders are in the midst of a 16 game winning streak in regular season conference action.
• MT holds the conference record with 20 consecutive regular season games won set during the 2006-07 seasons.
• Middle Tennessee has a 48-11 record in conference road games. The last Blue Raider SBC loss on the road was a 69-61 decision at UALR on Feb. 20, 2011.
• Coach Insell is 61-1 all-time against conference foes at the Murphy Center.
• Since joining the Sun Belt in 2000, the Raiders hold a 10-2 mark in conference openers. Coach Insell is a perfect 7-0 during his tenure.

Scouting Louisiana • The Ragin' Cajuns open the Sun Belt season with a 2-2 record. UL has lost two consecutive games with setbacks at Nebraska-Omaha (79-67) and Nicholls State (71-62).
• Coach Garry Brodhead enters his first season at the realm of the program. He spent the past five seasons as the Associate Head Coach at McNeese State. While at MSU, Brodhead helped the Cowgirls to a 52-15 record over the past two seasons. Prior to his arrival at McNeese, Brodhead spent 10 seasons at Lafayette's Tuerlings Catholic High School, where he compiled a 297-78 record.

• UL is a young-laden program with a combined nine freshmen and sophomores. Louisiana is averaging 70.8 points per game, while four players are in double figures.
• The Cajuns are averaging 16 turnovers per game and is shooting 43 percent (111x260) from the field.
• Freshman Sylvana Okde has been the team's top producer with 14.3 points and a team-best 13 made triples. Forward Ashley Benjamin is second with 13 points and 5.5 rebounds per game. The top rebounder is Byronesha Santiago with 7.3 rebounds per game, while boasting 9.5 points a contest.

Series with the Ragin' Cajuns• Louisiana and Middle Tennessee meet for the 18th time on Saturday. The Blue Raiders hold a strong 17-0 edge in the series that began on Feb. 17, 2001.
• Middle Tennessee has defeated UL by an average of 21 points during the past 17 meetings.
• There have only been three games decided by 10 points or less: Jan. 25, 2005, Jan. 26, 2006 and March 6, 2007- all of which were under UL head coach J. Kelly Hall.
• Last season, the Blue Raiders blistered the Ragin' Cajuns 104-53 in a 51 point victory at the Murphy Center - ranking as the eighth highest margin of victory win in school history. The Blue Raiders grabbed 50 rebounds in the game, the highest in the Rick Insell era, as MT out-worked UL 50-30 on the boards.

WNIT All-Tournament Team Honor• Junior forward Ebony Rowe was selected to the Preseason WNIT All-Tournament team announced on Sunday. The Lexington, Ky., product registered two

double-doubles and averaged 22 points and 11.3 rebounds in three games. Rowe scored a season-high 24 points and grabbed 16 rebounds in the overtime loss at Iowa. She also led Middle Tennessee with 23 points and 11 boards in the season-opening victory against Kennesaw State.

Two Named to Naismith Watch List • Kortni Jones and Ebony Rowe were selected to the Naismith Women's Basketball College Player of the Year early season watch list announced by the Atlanta Tipoff Club.
• Rowe has made two impressive seasons as a Blue Raider. She became the second Blue Raider sophomore to reach 1,000 points. The Lexington, Ky., product has totaled 64 double-figuring scoring games in her career. Rowe moved into fifth all-time at MT with 34 career double-doubles after totaling a season-best 24 points and 16 rebounds in the loss at Iowa. She is posting 19.5 points and 10.8 rebounds in four games.
• Jones set a school record with 115 made triples last year, moving her to 10th all-time on the NCAA single-season chart. Jones had double scoring performances in 31 of 33 games last season. The Oak Ridge native moved into seventh all-time at MT with her trifecta of triples against the Iowa Hawkeyes. This season, she is averaging 18.5 points per game with a team-high 12 treys.

Last Time Out • Middle Tennessee overcame a strong performance by Tennessee Tech to take a 65-59 win against the Golden Eagles in overtime. The game was the first back-to-back OT contests for the Blue Raiders since playing Eastern Illinois and Southeast Missouri in extra periods in Jan. 1997. Kortni Jones registered a season-best 24 points, while grabbing five rebounds in the victory. Ebony Rowe and Icelyn Elie each added 12 points, while sophomore Shanice Cason snatched a career-high 10 rebounds.

Attendance Starting High • Support is at all-time high for Middle Tennessee women's basketball. The Blue Raiders are averaging 4,540 fans per game in their first two home games.
• MT set the best attendance mark in the first two rounds of the Preseason WNIT. 5,806 fans packed the house on Nov. 9 against KSU, which ranks as the seventh largest in school history. The Raiders followed up with 3,273 against in-state foe Memphis on Nov. 11.

Cason Nets Career-High• Guard Shanice Cason set a new career standard with 10 rebounds in the OT win at Tennessee Tech. The Murfreesboro product grabbed nine of those 10 boards off the defensive glass to help MT to its eighth straight win over TTU. Cason is averaging 7.5 points and 5.3 rebounds this season.

Road Warriors • Middle Tennessee will have logged 5,000 miles by the time the Blue Raiders five-game road swing ends next week. The road swing began at Iowa on Nov. 14, from there the Blue Raiders traveled to Tennessee Tech on Nov. 20 and open Sun Belt action at Louisiana on Nov. 24. To conclude the road swing, MT travels east to Knoxville before closing the road docket at South Dakota State on Dec. 1.

Continuing to Rowe• Junior Ebony Rowe is 34 points away from entering the Top 20 on MT's all-time scoring list. Currently, the junior has notched 1,147 points in 68 games played.
• Rowe would become the seventh player under Coach Insell to reach the Top 20.
• In 2011-12, Rowe joined Priscilla Robinson as the only Blue Raider to reach 1,000 in her sophomore campaign.
• Rowe is the 26th member of the 1,000-point club and the 10th to play at least one season under coach Rick Insell.

Doubling History • Junior Ebony Rowe moved into fifth all-time in career double-doubles on Nov. 14 at Iowa (24 p, 16 r). Rowe is just four shy of reaching the all-time leader in Priscilla Robinson.
• Rowe has 34 double-figure rebounding games and has totaled 65 double-figure scoring contests.
Give Me the Freebies
• Middle Tennessee is a perfect 3-0 when shooting 70-plus percent from the charity stripe. The Raiders' three wins have also come from shooting more freebies than their opponent. Collectively, MT has knocked down 75 percent (47-of-63) of their attempted freebies this year.

Off the Glass • The all-time offensive rebounding record is in sight for Ebony Rowe. She is 14 away (354) from reaching record Holder Krystle Horton's mark of 368 set during the 2004-07 seasons.
• Rowe is four grabs shy (689) of reaching the Top 10 in total rebounds. Kim Webb and Chrissy Givens are tied for ninth all-time with 692 boards during their illustrious careers.

A Jones-ing for the Record Books• The senior ranks seventh with 183 made triples and is 11 away from reaching sixth.
• Jones reached 10th all-time in assists with four at Tennessee Tech. She has dished out 355 in her career and needs one more to take sole possession of 10th away from Janet Ross.

1,000-point Club Watch• Two Blue Raiders are on the verge of becoming the 27th and 28th members of the MT 1,000-point club.
• Kortni Jones has 924 points and is just a 76 away from reaching the club.
• Senior Icelyn Elie is 116 points shy, as she has accumulated 884 points in three-plus seasons.

Insell Inching Closer to All-Time Mark• Rick Insell now stands just five victories shy of tying Lewis Bivens for the all-time record.
• Insell joins current Blue Raider men's coach, Kermit Davis, in a race to catch Bivens as the winningest basketball coach in school history. Davis became the winningest men's coach last season, surpassing Jimmy Earle.

Nice Ice• Senior Icelyn Elie posted her 13th career double-figure rebounding perfomance with 11 grabs at Iowa.
• The forward reached the top 25 in rebounding by corraling four at Tennessee Tech. Elie moved past Amber Holt with her 489th rebound. She has averaged 5.6 rpg in her career.

Reaching the Century Mark• Overall, the Blue Raiders have posted a 37-7 record in school history in 100-point games, including 13 consecutive wins, all under Insell's watch.

Education Day Set for Dec. 4MT Athletics and the Murfreesboro City Schools announced last month that the two institutions are partnering together for 'Education Day' on Tuesday, Dec. 4. MT WBB is scheduled to play in-state rival Austin Peay early in an 11 a.m. contest. The early time allows the 12 MCS to bring thousands of students to cheer on the Blue Raiders.

BRAA Sponsoring Trip to Tennessee• The BRAA will be sponsoring a bus trip for Middle Tennessee's game at Tennessee on Wednesday, Nov. 28.
• Regal Transportation Services will provide a 53-seat private executive coach with a flat screen TV and restroom. The bus will leave from the Greenland Drive parking lot on Wednesday at 2 PM and return to Murfreesboro immediately following the game.
• The cost of the Tennessee trip is $60 per person for the bus. Tickets to the game are not included.

Tickets are on sale for $15 and you can call the ticket office (1-888-YES-MTSU) or purchase online at GoBlueRaiders.com.

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