Raiders upset bid of No. 16/14 Tennessee falls short in OT

MT played in third overtime in last four games

November 28, 2012 · @MTAthletics

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee used a strong balanced attack, but their bid to upset No. 16/14 Tennessee fell short in overtime as the Blue Raiders dropped an 88-81 contest to the Lady Volunteers in front of 10,768 at Thompson-Boling Arena.

For the third time in four games the Raiders found themselves in overtime. MT (4-2) held a 12 point lead in the first half, but the Lady Vols (5-1) chipped away the Raiders' advantage to 39-35 at the half. Middle Tennessee held on to its lead until Kamiko Williams hit a bank shot at 4:26 in the second half to give UT a 64-63 edge.

From there, UT stretched their lead to five in the dwindling minutes of regulation. Laken Leonard hit a triple followed by an Ebony Rowe basket to put the Raiders within three with 40 seconds to go.

Shanice Cason picked up a critical rebound that set up an Icelyn Elie game-tying triple with 2.3 seconds remaining in the second half. In overtime, Rowe's jumper gave Middle Tennessee a 77-75 lead with 3:47 left. Tennessee went on an 8-0 run to close out the game.

The Blue Raiders shot 46 percent with 33 out of 72 shots knocked down. Beyond the arch, MT knocked down seven triples. The Lady Vols were held to 43 percent shooting (34-of-78), while outrebounding MT 45-42. Tennessee had 21 free throw attempts to just 12 for Middle Tennessee.

Elie notched a game-best 21 points and pulled in seven rebounds, while handing out four assists. Rowe inked her 35th career double-double with 19 points and 12 rebounds in 45 minutes of action.

Whitleyville's Laken Leonard set a career-high with 17 points and five rebounds, snatching three steals in the process. Shanice Cason earned a season-high with 13 points and had eight rebounds.

Kortni Jones, a native of Oak Ridge, played a solid contest with nine points, eight assists and four rebounds.

Middle Tennessee used a strong first half including starting off on a 9-4 run. Laken Leonard hit a pair of treys to extend MT's advantage to 18-12.

The Raiders extended their lead to 12 points when Rowe notched a basket to give MT a 31-19 edge. Tennessee used a 10-2 run to cut the deficit to 33-29.

MT used a pair of baskets from Jones and an Elie bucket to take a 39-35 lead into the locker room - marking the first time UT had trailed an opponent at the half.

Offensively, MT shot 45 percent with 15 made baskets out of 33 attempts. Cason led the team with 10 points, while Rowe and Cason each had six rebounds. UT shot 42 percent in the first half (16-of-38).

In the second half, MT went back and forth with UT and held the advantage for most of regulation. Tennessee took over and extended a lead to five until MT went on a 5-0 run to carry the game into overtime.

In overtime, Tennessee outscored the Blue Raiders 15-8 to snatch their 13th victory over the Raiders.

On Saturday, Middle Tennessee travels to South Dakota State to close out a five game roadtrip. Tipoff is set for 4 p.m.

The Blue Raiders return home to host Austin Peay for Education Day sponsored by Aaron's and Academy Sports and Outdoors on Tuesday, Dec. 4. The tipoff is scheduled for 11 a.m. as 7,000 students from Murfreesboro City Schools will partake in the event. In order to accommodate the large amount of students, season ticket holder seating will be moved to the first 10 rows of reserved seating in sections D,E,F,N,O and P. Those sections will be roped off and monitored by security personnel. All other sections are general admission for MCS students.

Notes

KeKe Stewart garnered her first start since earning the nod against Austin Peay on Dec. 6, 2011 ... Laken Leonard set a career-high with 17 points, surpassing a previous of 13 set against Western Kentucky last year ... Ebony Rowe earned her 35th career double-double ... Kortni Jones played in her 100th game as a Blue Raider ... MT falls to 0-13 all-time to Tennessee ... Wednesday's game was the first overtime game in the MT / UT series ... Ebony Rowe moved into 19th all-time in scoring with 1,187 points in her career, passing Holly Hoover and Anne Marie Lanning ... Kortni Jones' eight assists ties her for ninth all-time with 370 in career with Julie Morrison.

Printed on March 11, 2014
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/64245