

Five game road swing closes at South Dakota State

Blue Raiders play Jackrabbits for seventh time

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The five game road swing finally ends for Middle Tennessee women's basketball when the Blue Raiders play at South Dakota State on Saturday, Dec. 1. The tipoff is slated for 4 p.m. at Frost Arena in Brookings, S.D.



GAME INFORMATION

Opponent: South Dakota State Jackrabbits (3-4)

Date: Saturday, December 1, 2012

Time: 4:00 p.m. Central Time

Location: Brookings, S.D.

Arena: Frost Arena (6,500)

SERIES INFORMATION

Overall: Tied at 3-3

Last Meeting: MT 59, South Dakota STATE 49 - Murfreesboro, Tenn. - Nov. 17, 2011

Under Rick Insell: 3-2

MEDIA INFORMATION

Live Webstream: GoJacks.com

Radio: WGNS 1450 AM, 100.5 FM, 101.9 FM

Play-by-Play: Dick Palmer

QUICK HITTERS

- For the third time in four games, Middle Tennessee (4-2) found itself playing an overtime contest. The Blue Raiders dropped an 88-81 decision to No. 16/14 Tennessee. MT led through most of the game before UT took its first lead with four minutes left in regulation. Icelyn Eile hit a triple to send the game to overtime, but UT outpaced MT 15-to-8 in OT to secure the win.
- Saturday's contest at SDSU wraps up a 5,000 mile, five game road swing for the Blue Raiders.

- In the recent Associated Press poll, MT received four votes for a ranking of 38th. The Raiders were 32nd in the USA Today Sports/ESPN Coaches Poll released on Tuesday.
- 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 19.7 ppg, followed by Kortni Jones and Icelyn Elie with 16.0 each. Rowe is also the leading rebounder with 10.5 per game.

Scouting South Dakota State

- The preseason favorites to repeat as champions of the Summit League, South Dakota State enters Saturday's game with a 3-4 record after a 77-74 loss to Marquette Wednesday night. Guard Ashley Eide led the Jackrabbits with 21 points as forward Megan Waytashek added 17. South Dakota State overcame an eight-point halftime deficit to force the extra period, but shot only 20% from the field in overtime. The Jackrabbits' wins this season have come against Washington State, Northern Illinois, and a nationally-ranked Nebraska squad.
- South Dakota State is averaging 60.1 points per game, but allowing 66.9 points per game. Eide leads the Jackrabbits with 13.4 points per game. Waytashek is second on the team in scoring with 11.6 points per game. The frontcourt duo of seniors Leah Dietel and Katie Lingle leads South Dakota State in rebounding. Dietel averages a team-high 6.7 rebounds per game with Lingle pulling down 5.4 boards a contest.
- Head Coach Aaron Johnston is in his 13th season at South Dakota State, compiling a record of 293-102. During his tenure, the Jackrabbits won a Division II national championship in 2003 and Summit League tournament titles in each of the last four seasons. Johnston was a finalist for the 2009 Naismith Award after leading the Jackrabbits to a 32-3 record and a no. 13 ranking in the final USA Today/ESPN coaches' poll. He was named Summit League Coach of the Year in 2008, 2009, and 2012.

Series with the Jackrabbits

- The all-time series between MT and South Dakota State is tied 3-3, with the two teams splitting four meetings in Murphy Center and two at Frost Arena in Brookings, S.D. The Jackrabbits won three of the first four meetings. The Raiders have won the last two, both played at Murphy Center. The average margin of victory in the series is 10.8 points. Each of the last four games between the two schools has been decided by at least 10 points.
- MT defeated SDSU last season 59-49 at Murphy Center. Icelyn Elie led all scorers with 22 points and added eight rebounds. Elie was 7-for-8 from the field and a perfect 8-for-8 at the foul line. Kortni Jones added 16 points. The Raiders held the Jackrabbits to 35.4% from the field for the game and 1-for-12 from beyond the arc. Jennie Sunnarborg was the only South Dakota State player to reach double-figures in scoring that day, putting up 10 points.
- The Raiders are 7-4 all-time against members of the Summit League.

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 946 points and is just a 54 away from reaching the club.
- Senior Icelyn Elie is 80 points shy, as she has accumulated 920 points in three-plus seasons.

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.

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 opened Sun Belt action at Louisiana on Nov. 24. To conclude the road swing, MT traveled east to Knoxville to play at Tennessee on Nov. 28 and closes out the road docket at South Dakota State on Saturday, Dec. 1.

Last Time Out

- Middle Tennessee dropped a gut wrenching 88-81 decision to No. 16/14 Tennessee in overtime on Wednesday. The Blue Raiders led for most of the game, but Tennessee surged back to take a five point lead in regulation. MT closed out the second half with an Icelyn Elie triple to send the game to OT. From there, the Lady Vols scored seven of their 15 points at the charity stripe to take the win. Elie notched a game-high 21 points, while Ebony Rowe inked her 35th career double-double with 19 points and 12 rebounds.

Overtime Frenzy

- Middle Tennessee leads the nation with three overtime battles this season. The Raiders have taken part in an extra period game in three of the last four contests. MT dropped a 69-63 contest at Iowa before rebounding with a 65-59 win at Tennessee Tech. On Wednesday, Middle Tennessee fell 88-81 to No. 16/14 Tennessee. South Dakota State has played two overtime games in seven games this year.
- The three OT games are the most for a Blue Raider squad since tallying four in the 2001-02 season under head coach Stephany Smith.

70+ is the Standard

- Since Rick Insell's arrival, the Blue Raiders have been lethal when scoring 70-plus points in a game. Middle Tennessee holds a 121-9 record when reaching the 70 point plateau. MT is 3-1 this season when scoring 70 or more.

Leonard Sets New Career Barrier

Junior guard Laken Leonard managed a career day with her performance at No. 16/14 Tennessee. The Whitleyville native boasted new personal bests with 17 points and six field goals in 43 minutes of action. She pulled in five rebounds and hit a career-high five three-pointers in the victory. This season, Leonard is averaging 6.8 points and 3.7 rebounds in six games.

National Rankings

- With the recent national rankings released on Monday, the Blue Raiders are among the top 50 in

three categories. MT is 37th with 7.2 3-pointers per game, 39th in scoring offense (73.8 ppg) and 39th in scoring margin (+16.6).

- The Raiders have two players in the nation's top 50. Guard Kortni Jones ranks 29th with 3.0 triples a contest and is 47th with 5.2 assists dished out per game. Ebony Rowe, a junior forward, is 33rd with 19.8 points per game and is 48th with 10.2 rebounds a contest.

Continuing to Rowe

- Junior Ebony Rowe reached the Top 20 scoring list at MT by scoring 19 points and reaching 1,187 points in her career. She is 36 pts from reaching 18th held by Jolenda Buck.
- Rowe is 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

- Ebony Rowe moved into fifth all-time in career double-doubles at Iowa (24 p, 16 r). She added her 35th double-double and her third this season at No. 16/14 Tennessee with 19 points and 12 rebounds.
- Rowe has 35 double-figure rebounding games and has totaled 67 double-figure scoring contests.

Give Me the Freebies

- The Raiders are 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 73 percent (59-of-81) of their attempted freebies this year.

Within Reach

- The all-time offensive rebounding record is three grabs away for junior Ebony Rowe. She has 366 in her career, two shy of Krystle Horton's 368 set during the 2004-07 seasons.
- Rowe moved to ninth all-time in career rebounding as she boasted eight boards at Louisiana. The junior is 37 away from reaching eighth place currently held by Krystle Horton.

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 totaled 67 double-figure scoring games in her career. The Lexington, Ky. product moved into fifth all-time at MT with 35 career double-doubles after totaling a season-best 24 points and 16 rebounds in the loss at Iowa. She is posting 19.6 points and 10.5 rebounds in five games.
- Jones set a school record with 115 made triples last year, moving her to 10th all-time on the NCAA single-season chart. 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 16.0 points per game with a team-high 15 treys.

A Jones-ing for the Record Books

- Kortni Jones continues to ink her historic mark in the record books.
- The senior ranks seventh with 188 made triples and is eight away from reaching sixth.
- Jones is tied for ninth all-time in assists with Julie Morrison. She has dished out 370 in her career and is six away from moving to eighth.
- Jones played her 100th career game at Tennessee on Nov. 28.

Insell Inching Closer to All-Time Mark

- Rick Insell now stands just four 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 performance with 11 grabs at Iowa.
- The forward reached the top 25 in rebounding by corralling four at Tennessee Tech.
- The Lebanon product's seven grabs at Tennessee moved her to 503 in her career.

Set the Sights on 20

- Ebony Rowe has reached 20 points on 21 occasions during her career. MT is a remarkable 19-2 when she scores 20-plus points in a game.

Education Day Set for Dec. 4

MT 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. The event is sponsored by Aaron's and Academy Sports and Outdoors. 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.

Rowe Rules Court, Classroom

- Ebony Rowe was recently featured in an ESPN.com article on Nov. 28 that highlighted the junior's strenuous work ethic on the hardwood and in the classroom. The Physics major from Lexington, Ky., spends numerous hours per day studying for classes such as thermodynamics and utilizes the rest of her time preparing to lead the Blue Raiders to victory. Fans can view the article online at <http://es.pn/10To7Al>.

Celebrating Title IX

The MT Athletic Department will remember 40 years of Title IX in a celebration during the Blue Raiders game against Xavier on Thursday, Dec. 4. Since the arrival of Title IX in 1972, the Blue Raiders have hoisted many conference championships, including 20 women's basketball titles.

Several Blue Raider legends will be on hand to partake in the ceremony.

Blue Raiders Join Conference USA

Middle Tennessee President Sidney A. McPhee announced on Thursday, Nov. 29 that the University has entered into a membership agreement to join Conference USA for intercollegiate athletics beginning no later than July 1, 2014. Conference USA is an established, nationally recognized FBS conference that sponsors 20 sport championships. C-USA teams and individuals have made nearly 700 NCAA championship appearances since the league's inception in 1995-96. Sixty-seven football programs have earned bowl bids, 90 men's basketball teams have participated in NCAA and NIT postseason play and 47 women's basketball squads have appeared in the NCAA Tournament. Conference USA members also enjoy significant national and regional television exposure and revenue sharing through a multi-tiered package that includes partnerships with CBS Sports Network, Fox Sports Media Group and ESPN.

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