MT closes out non-conference slate at No. 7/6 Kentucky

Blue Raiders and Wildcats tip at Noon CT on FS South

December 8, 2012 · @MTAthletics

Middle Tennessee closes out non-conference action this Sunday, Dec. 9 with a visit to No. 7/6 Kentucky. The Blue Raiders and Wildcats square off in a Noon CT/1 p.m. ET matchup on Fox Sports South at Memorial Coliseum in Lexington.

GAME INFORMATION

Opponent: No. 7/6 Kentucky Wildcats (7-1)
Date: Sunday, Dec. 9, 2012
Time: Noon CT/1:00 p.m. ET
Location: Lexington, Ky.
Arena: Memorial Coliseum (8,000)

SERIES INFORMATION

Overall: UK leads series, 9-4
In Lexington: UK leads series, 6-1
Last Meeting: MT 70, No. 6/6 Kentucky 58 - Dec. 28, 2011 - Murfreesboro, Tenn.
Under Rick Insell: 2-2

MEDIA INFORMATION

Television: Fox Sports South / ESPN3.com (subject to blackout)
Play-by-Play: Garry Gupton
Color Analyst: Christi Thomas
Sideline Reporter: Carl Nathe
Radio: WMOT (89.5 FM)/WGNS 1450 AM, 100.5 FM, 101.9 FM
Play-by-Play: Dick Palmer
Color Analyst: Duane Hickey
Live Audio
Live Stats

QUICK HITTERS

• MT (6-3) returns to the road after sweeping a two-game homestand with wins over Austin Peay (70-56) and Xavier (63-48). MT used a 21-6 run to close out the game pick up their 14th consecutive win at home, which is tied for 10th in the nation. Ebony Rowe moved into second all-time with 37 career double-doubles, posting 24 points and 14 rebounds in the win over Xavier.
• Coach Rick Insell (180) is just two wins shy of tying Lewis Bivens (182) for all-time wins at Middle Tennessee. Insell owns a .759 win percentage in eight seasons at the helm of the program.
• Three Raiders, all preseason First Team All-Sun Belt selections, are averaging double-figures in seven games so far: Ebony Rowe (19.9), Kortni Jones (14.9) and Icelyn Elie (14.7).
• Two Raiders are close to entering the 1,000-pt club: guard Kortni Jones is 16 away, while forward Icelyn Elie is 44 points shy.

Scouting No. 7/6 Kentucky

• No. 7/6 Kentucky (7-1) has won six consecutive games since dropping an 85-51 decision at then ranked No. 1/1 Baylor on Nov. 13.
• The Wildcats thrashed DePaul 96-64 in front of a record crowd of 18,488 at Rupp Arena on Friday. Last Sunday, UK used a last second bucket to upend No. 7/6 Louisville at the KFC Yum! Center in front of 15,453 fans.
• UK's offense ranks 21st in the NCAA with 76.3 points scored per game. Defensively, the Wildcats are giving up just 50.3 points per contest, which ranks 20th.
• UK has two players averaging double-figures with senior A'dia Mathies tallying 13.8 points and 4.8 rebounds per game. Mathies is the Wildcats top assists and steals leader with 23 and 17, respectively. Center DeNesha Stallworth is boasting 10.8 points per game with 5.8 boards off the glass. Samarie Walker has averaged a team-best 7.9 rebounds per game with 9.3 points a contest in eight starts this season.
• UK has won 36 straight non-conference home games dating back to Dec. 19, 2008 and has won 26th consecutive home contests.
• Matthew Mitchell is in his sixth year at the helm of the UK program, ranking third all-time at UK with 121 victories.

Series with the Wildcats

• Middle Tennessee and Kentucky meet for the 14th time on Sunday and for the eighth time in Lexington.
• Last season, the Blue Raiders upended the No. 6 Wildcats, 70-58, for the highest win over a ranked program in school history in front of 5,186 fans at the Murphy Center. MT had three players reach double-figures as Icelyn Elie led the game with 23 points. Lexington native Ebony Rowe boasted 21 points, while Kortni Jones added 15 for the Raiders. UK was held to under 32 percent shooting, while the Raiders notched 46 percent on the evening.
• MT has won two of the last three meetings, both of which were in Murfreesboro. MT last won in Lexington on Jan. 9, 1984 with a 74-68 defeat of the Wildcats.
• In the previous two meetings at Memorial Coliseum since the series revived in 2008, MT has lost 68-66 in overtime (March 21, 2008 - WNIT) and 81-72 (Jan. 29, 2010).

Big Blue Connections

• MT and UK have several connections to the program. Head Coach Rick Insell's son Matt Insell is an assistant on Matthew Mitchell's staff. The younger Insell, a 2007 Middle Tennessee graduate, has been with the Wildcats for five seasons. Junior forward Ebony Rowe is a Lexington native and played her high school ball at Dunbar. This past summer, Rowe returned to Lexington to complete an internship in engineering at Lexmark. Big Blue Sports Network broadcaster Neil Price is a Middle Tennessee graduate and broadcasted for the Blue Raiders women's basketball program before arriving to Kentucky in 2005.

Blue Raiders versus the SEC

• Middle Tennessee is 23-60 all-time against Southeastern Conference opponents.
• Since Rick Insell's arrival the Blue Raiders have collected six wins over the SEC. Most recently, MT knocked off No. 6/6 Kentucky, 70-58, on Dec. 28, 2011.
• The Raiders dropped a heartbreaking 88-81 overtime decision at No. 16/14 Tennessee on Nov. 28.

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 984 points and is just a 16 away from reaching the club.
• Senior Icelyn Elie is 44 points shy, as she has accumulated 956 points in three-plus seasons.

Recapping the Xavier game

• MT (6-3) used a 21-6 run to close the game and upend Xavier, 63-48, on Thursday evening. Ebony Rowe moved into second all-time with 37 career double-doubles (24 pts, 14 rebs), tying former Blue Raider greats Alysha Clark and Jennifer McFall. Icelyn Elie added her eighth double-figure scoring game this season, while Janay Brinkley reached a career-high 10 points. MT shot 43 percent (26-of-61) and forced 27 Musketeers turnovers to pick up their 14th consecutive win at home. The win streak is tied for 10th in the NCAA.

Soaring in Attendance

• MT women's basketball has accumulated remarkable numbers in attendance so far this season. The Blue Raiders are averaging 5,603 fans per game after three home affairs. The Raiders welcomed their second largest crowd in school history with 10,107 against Austin Peay on Dec. 4.
• 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.

Continuing to Rowe

• Junior Ebony Rowe (1,248) moved to 16th all-time at MT in scoring, passing Kay Wilbanks and Brandi Brown's total of 1,236 points. She needs just 99 points to move into the Top 15.
• Rowe is the seventh player under Coach Insell to reach MT's Top 20 scoring list.
• In 2011-12, Rowe joined Priscilla Robinson as the only Blue Raider to reach 1,000 in her sophomore campaign.
• She is also the 26th member of the 1,000-point club and the 10th 1,000-pt club member to play at

least one season under coach Rick Insell.

Set the Sights on 20

• Ebony Rowe has reached 20 points on 23 occasions during her career. MT is a remarkable 20-3 when she scores 20-plus points in a game.

National Statistical Rankings

• The Blue Raiders are in the top 50 in four statistical categories as released by the NCAA on Monday, Dec. 4. MT is 42nd in scoring offense (72.3 ppg), 37th in free throw percentage (74.5%), 34th in 3-point field goals per game (7.0) and 31st in turnover margin (+5.86).
• Middle Tennessee has several players in the top 100. Rowe ranks 26th with 20.1 points per game and is 48th with 10.0 rebounds a contest. Senior Kortni Jones is 38th with 5.4 assists per game. Shanice Cason ranks 52nd with 3.14 steals, while Jones is 37th with 2.57 triples each game.

Rowe Reaches New Heights

• Ebony Rowe broke the school record for offensive rebounds with her three grabs at South Dakota State last week. She now has 383 offensive boards in two-plus seasons.
• Rowe is ninth all-time in career rebounding. She is two away from reaching eighth place currently held by Krystle Horton.

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 ranks 25th with 517 rebounds and she is six shy of tying Jolenda Buck (523) for 24th all-time.

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 135-9 record when reaching the 70 point plateau. MT is 4-1 this season when scoring 70 or more.

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. Last Wednesday, Middle Tennessee fell 88-81 to No. 16/14 Tennessee.
• 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.

Doubling History

• Ebony Rowe moved into second all-time with
Alysha Clark and Jennfier McFall with 37 double-doubles with 24p and 14r vs. Xavier.

• Rowe has 37 double-figure rebounding games and has totaled 70 double-figure scoring contests during her career.

Insell Closer to All-Time Wins Mark

• Rick Insell now stands just two wins 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.

Brinkley Encounters Career Night

• Junior guard Janay Brinkley registered her best performance since joining the Blue Raiders. The Pasadena, Md., native totaled four baskets for 10 points in a career-high 28 minutes in Middle Tennessee's win over Xavier. Brinkely has set career highs in back-to-back contests.

Versus Ranked Opponents

• The Blue Raiders are 4-42 overall against ranked opponents with three of the victories coming in the last eight years, since head coach Rick Insell took over the program.
• All three of the wins under Insell have been against Southeastern Conference competition.
• Middle Tennessee picked up perhaps the biggest win in program history last year when it knocked off No. 6/6 Kentucky, 70-58, at home Dec. 28, 2011.
• The Wildcats' No. 6/6 ranking ties for the highest by an opponent in the four victories, matching the No. 6 mark attained by Tennessee Tech in 1977.
• The 12-point margin of victory was the largest of the four triumphs, surpassing the previous best of 11 (67-56) against then-No. 8/8 LSU exactly four years earlier, Dec. 28, 2007.
• Middle Tennessee has posted three of the four wins against nationally-ranked foes inside the friendly confines of the Murphy Center.

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