

No. 7/6 Kentucky uses pressure to defeat Raiders

Elie and Rowe tally double-doubles in loss

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LEXINGTON, Ky. - Stifling defensive pressure by No. 7/6 Kentucky limited Middle Tennessee as the Blue Raiders dropped a 68-46 decision to the Wildcats on Sunday afternoon.

The Wildcats (8-1) forced 33 Blue Raider turnovers, the most for MT since committing 30 against South Florida in 2010. Middle Tennessee (6-4) dominated the glass, picking up 45 boards to just 31 for the Cats. MT shot 15-of-48 from the field for 31 percent, and hit 2-of-14 (14 percent) behind the arch. UK shot 39 percent (25-of-65) as the Wildcats scored 39 of their 68 points off Raider turnovers.



Two Blue Raiders reached double-figures. Lexington native Ebony Rowe tallied 19 points and 10 rebounds to reach her sixth double-double this season. Rowe tied the school career double-double record held by Priscilla Robinson with her 38th on Sunday. She also reached double-digit scoring for the 71st time.

Icelyn Elie, a product of Lebanon, answered with 15 points and 13 rebounds for her 13th career double-double. The senior shot 50 percent (5-of-10) from the field and collected two blocks in 40 minutes.

Guard Laken Leonard added six points and grabbed four rebounds in 33 minutes against UK.

Middle Tennessee struggled early with the length from the Wildcats as UK took a 7-0 advantage to start the contest. All of Kentucky's points came off Raider turnovers. MT answered with baskets from KeKe Stewart and Leonard to cut the deficit to 7-4 with 15:50 remaining.

Rowe's basket and her connection with a plus-one put the Raiders within two, 11-9, with 11:22 left.

However, from there UK held MT scoreless from a field goal until 58 seconds left in the half as the Raiders trailed 32-16 at the break.

MT out-rebounded UK 23-18 in the opening half, but the Raiders struggled shooting, knocking down 6-of-24 for 25 percent. Rowe led the Raiders with 8 points, while Elie had eight boards.

The second half triggered a trifecta of triples for Kentucky to continue their lead. MT made the four of their first five field goal attempts and cut the deficit to 41-27 with 15:33 left .

Elie hit a trey, Rowe followed up with two freebies and Elie added a layup to put the Raiders within 10, 41-31, with 14:32 left.

However, UK busted open the game on a 12-5 run to take command of the contest. The Wildcats shot 44 percent in the second half and limited the Raiders to 38 percent in the final period.

The Raiders take an 11 day break as final exams are in full swing this week. MT returns to Sun Belt Conference play against FIU on Thursday, Dec. 20. Tipoff is set for 7 p.m. inside the Murphy Center.

NOTES

Middle Tennessee was held to its lowest scoring total in the first half (16) since notching 15 against No. 7/15 LSU on Nov. 18, 2009 ... Icelyn Elie reached her first double-double of the season with 15 points and 13 rebounds ... The double-double was her 13th in her career ... Ebony Rowe tied a school record held by Priscilla Robinson with her 38th double-double on Sunday ... Rowe has six this season ... MT falls to 4-10 all-time against Kentucky and 1-7 in Lexington.

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