Rowe sets new double-doubles mark in Raiders' loss

FIU defense gives MT first Sun Belt loss

December 20, 2012 · @MTAthletics

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Ebony Rowe rewrote the record books with her 39th career double-double, but her effort fell just short as Middle Tennessee was plagued by turnovers and missed opportunities in a 58-51 loss to FIU on Thursday at the Murphy Center.

MT (6-5, 1-1 Sun Belt) cut their deficit to within one with four-plus minutes remaining, but the Panthers (6-4, 2-2 SBC) used a 13-7 run to give the Raiders their first loss at home since falling to UALR on Feb. 6, 2008. The loss snapped one of the nation's longest home conference win streaks at 37.

Rowe broke a record that stood 18 years as the junior forward inked her 39th career double-double. Her new mark broke the previous standard of 38 set by Priscilla Robinson (1991-94). Rowe led MT with 19 points and grabbed 12 rebounds on the night. She shot 50 percent (7-of-14) from the field, while notching three steals and two blocks.

Shanice Cason tied a career-best with six field goals and totaled a season-high 15 points. The Murfreesboro native collected three rebounds, two assists and two steals in the loss.

Middle Tennessee shot a season-low 14.3 percent (3 of 21) from three-point range and were 33 percent (20-of-61) from the field. FIU (6-4, 2-2 SBC) knocked down 47 percent (22-of-47) of their attempts, as the Panthers won the rebound battle 42-to-32.

The Blue Raiders twice stretched its lead to five in the first half, jumping out to a 13-8 edge off of Laken Leonard's three-pointer near the 13-minute mark.

With 6:22 remaianing, Middle Tennessee attempted to pull away, grabbing a six-point lead when

Cason hit a short jumper. The Panthers, however, hung around and slowly crept back to take a 25-24 lead into the half.

MT struggled with foul trouble throughout the first half, as Leonard and Icelyn Elie saw limited minutes due to three fouls each, as MT were outdone on the boards, 24-12. The Raiders also shot 16.7 percent (1-6) from three-point land, while knocking down 38 percent (11-of-29) from the field.

After the half, the Blue Raiders came out fired up as forward Janiece Johnson made a layup almost immediately and Cason drew a charge on the opposite end.

Struggles continued for both teams as they combined for just five points and six turnovers before the first media timeout.

Rowe attempted to jumpstart the Blue Raider offense after a six minute scoring drought with a free throw and a layup, putting MT within four with 11 minutes remaining.

After allowing FIU to pull ahead as much as seven, Rowe grabbed a steal and took it the distance for an easy layup, putting MT within one, 44-45 with just over four minutes to go. The Raiders were unable to regain the go-ahead lead and the Panthers pulled away for their second Sun Belt victory of the season.

Middle Tennessee takes a short holiday break and returns to action against North Texas on Dec. 27 at the Murphy Center. Tipoff is set for 7 p.m.

NOTES

Shanice Cason set a season high in points scored with 15, besting her previous high of 13 at Tennessee ... Cason's six field goals tied a career-high previously set against Tennessee State on Dec. 18, 2011 ... Ebony Rowe set a new MT school record with 39 career double-doubles, passing the previous record of 38 set by Priscilla Robinson ... Rowe reached double figures for the 11th consecutive game and the 72nd time in her career ... The loss to FIU snapped a 37-game Sun Belt win streak at home inside the Murphy Center ... Coach Rick Insell is 61-2 all-time against SBC competition at home.

QUOTES

Head Coach Rick Insell

Opening Statement:

FIU's got a good basketball team, they know what their role is and they play their role. They were able to get us in their game, and we didn't hit shots, and they were able to win the basketball game. They played good enough to win. They played together, and that was the difference. We do take a lot of pride in playing here and we just didn't play well tonight. We didn't play with any emotion, we didn't put the ball in the hole and we didn't hit the three's. Every game we have lost, it's been because we haven't shot the three well. Icelyn (Elie) was one for six, and four rebounds in 29 minutes. We've got to do better than that.

On if the 11-day break hurt the team:

We practiced hard and aggressive, but we didn't practice long. I felt like we had plenty of legs and I felt like we were executing pretty good to start the game. Then all of a sudden we missed a one-footer, then gave up a one-footer. (Jerica) Coley had 23 points, but it wasn't one of her better games. That was a big three-pointer that she hit late. We had the game cut down to two a couple of times in the second half, but then we gave up some cheap baskets. We can't do that.

Junior Forward Ebony Rowe

On the loss:

It was a struggle tonight, and even though I tied the record for most double-doubles in a career, it doesn't mean anything to me unless we win. And we didn't win tonight.

On the play of FIU:

I'm going to give them a lot of credit. They played hard, and they outrebounded us. And it wasn't just their post players, it was their guards too. They were sending everyone to the boards. When you are rebounding, you know you are playing hard. The just came out and played harder than we did, that's all.

On losing a home conference game:

I had never lost a home conference game. I think before this one, we'd only lost one (since Coach Insell has been here). We are really disappointed because we carry a lot of pride in this program, and it has a lot of history. So not only did we let ourselves down, we let a lot of people down that had come before us. We'll take a couple of days and work to get better, then spend some time at home, then come in and do better next time.

Sophomore Guard Shanice Cason

On the play of FIU:

They just came mentally and physically prepared. They knew every single thing that we were trying to run. Give them a lot of credit for playing hard and going after us. We have to come back with the mindset that we've got to get it done, and play better, because we don't lose at home.

Printed on March 9, 2014
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/64610