Raiders host North Texas in SBC tilt Thursday

MT looking to bounce back after setback to FIU

December 26, 2012 · MT Athletic Communications

Middle Tennessee (6-5, 1-1 Sun Belt) continues conference action at Murphy Center on Thursday, Dec. 27 when the Blue Raiders host North Texas (2-8, 1-0 SBC) in a 7 p.m. contest.

GAME INFORMATION

Opponent: North Texas Mean Green (2-8, 1-0 Sun Belt)
Date: Thursday, Dec. 27, 2012
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Location: Murfreesboro, Tenn.
Arena: Murphy Center (11,520)
Tickets: GoBlueRaiders.com or call 1-888-YES-MTSU

SERIES INFORMATION

Overall: MT leads series, 13-4
In Murfreesboro: MT leads series, 5-1
Last Meeting: MT 70, North Texas 68 - Feb. 2, 2012 - Denton, Texas
Under Rick Insell: 8-1

MEDIA INFORMATION

Radio: WMOT (89.5 FM)/WGNS 1450 AM, 100.5 FM, 101.9 FM
Play-by-Play: Dick Palmer
Color Analyst: Duane Hickey
Live Video
Live Audio
Live Stats

Quick Hitters...

• Middle Tennessee (6-5, 1-1 Sun Belt) returns after the holiday break with a rare home loss to a

SBC foe. The Raiders dropped a 58-51 decision to FIU last Thursday and are looking to bounce back from the setback. Under Rick Insell's watch, MT is 61-2 against conference foes at the Murphy Center and 37-17 overall after suffering a loss.
• Coach Rick Insell (180) is just two wins shy of tying Lewis Bivens (182) for all-time wins at Middle Tennessee. Insell owns a .753 win percentage in eight seasons at the helm of the program.
• Three Raiders, each preseason First Team All-Sun Belt selections, are averaging double-figures in 11 games so far: Ebony Rowe (19.7), Icelyn Elie (13.5) and Kortni Jones (12.8).
• Kortni Jones is nine points away, while Icelyn Elie is 27 shy of reaching 1,000 points at MT.
• Ebony Rowe inked her 39th career double-double with 19 points and 12 rebounds versus FIU to set a new MT record. The Lexington, Ky., native surpassed the previous school record of 38 double-doubles set by Priscilla Robinson in 1994.

GAME NOTES

Scouting North Texas

• The Mean Green (2-8, 1-0 SBC) continues their three-game road trip with a visit to the Murphy Center on Thursday. The Mean Green have been very competitive in most of their games. NT lost a triple overtime battle to Alabama (88-83) on Nov. 19 and a 72-71 defeat to St. Bonaventure in double overtime on Nov. 24. NT has lost three consecutive games, including a 73-62 setback at Tulane on Dec. 22. The Mean Green opened Sun Belt play on Dec. 1 with a 71-59 win at the Super Pit.
• Through 10 games, NT is boasting 67.7 points per game and shooting a 38.9 percent clip (244-of-628). NT is 55-of-193 behind the arc (.285) and is averaging 41.1 rebounds per contest.
• The Mean Green are led by a trifecta of underclassmen. Freshman Alexis Hyder is boasting 12.1 points, while shooting 51 percent (47-of-92) from the field. BreAnna Dawkins, a sophomore, is boasting 11.2 points with 3.1 rebounds per game. Houston's Loryn Goodwin comes off the bench to average 10 points per game with a team-high 34 steals in 10 contests. Sara Stanley is the leading rebounder for NT with 6.5 boards each game.
• Mike Peterson joins NT after spending eight seasons at Wake Forest. While at WF, he became the school's winningest coach and boasted a 20-14 record last season. Peterson has traversed the west with stops at Minnesota, TCU, New Mexico State, Oregon and Gonzaga.

Series with the Mean Green

• Middle Tennessee and North Texas meet for the 18th time on Thursday. The Blue Raiders hold a distinct 13-4 edge in the series that began on Jan. 6, 2001. MT has won eight consecutive games dating back to 2007. Coach Rick Insell is 8-1 all-time against NT, with his only blemish a 69-64 loss to NT in his first ever meeting on Feb. 8, 2006. The Blue Raiders have not lost to the Mean Green at the Murphy Center since Jan. 19, 2002.
• Last season, the Raiders used a 70-68 win to preserve its 12 game win streak last season. Icelyn Elie led all players in scoring with 22 points, including 6-of-7 field goals and a career-best 9-of-10 at the free throw line. She was one of four Middle Tennessee starters in double figures.

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 991 points and is just a nine away from reaching the club.

• Senior Icelyn Elie is 27 points shy, as she has accumulated 973 points in three-plus seasons.

Recapping the FIU game

• Ebony Rowe rewrote the record books with her 39th career double-double, but her effort fell 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.

In Sun Belt Play

• Coach Rick Insell is a remarkable 107-13 against Sun Belt competition in the regular season.
• His win total ranks fifth in SBC history and his winning percentage (.891) is second all-time behind Louisiana Tech's Leon Barmore.
• The Blue Raiders' 17 game winning streak in regular season conference action was snapped on Dec. 20 with a 58-51 loss to FIU.
• MT holds the conference record with 20 consecutive regular season games won set during the 2006-07 seasons.

Soaring in Attendance

• MT women's basketball has accumulated remarkable numbers in attendance so far this season. The Blue Raiders are averaging 5,044 fans per game after five 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 Kennesaw State, which ranks as the seventh largest in school history. The Raiders followed up with 3,273 against in-state foe Memphis on Nov. 11.

Rowe Leading the Way

• Junior Ebony Rowe (1,286) ranks 16th all-time at MT in scoring, passing Kay Wilbanks and Brandi Brown's total of 1,236 points. She needs 49 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.

Jones Moving up the Charts

• Senior Kortni Jones is in three Top 10 career categories at MT. The senior ranks third all-time with

581 3-point attempts. Her 383 assists ranks her eighth and she is just 11 away from reaching seventh. Jones is sixth all-time with 197 made-triples, passing Chelsia Lymon's 196 set in 2010. She is nine points shy of becoming the 27th member of the 1,000-point club.

Rowe Reaches New Heights

• Ebony Rowe broke the school record for offensive rebounds with her three grabs at South Dakota State. She now has 392 offensive boards in two-plus seasons.
• Rowe moved into fifth all-time at MT, passing former Raiders Holly Hoover and Patrice Holmes with her 10 rebounds at Kentucky. She is four away from reaching fourth all-time.

At Home Under Insell

• Middle Tennessee holds a daunting 94-11 record under Coach Rick Insell inside the friendly confines of the Murphy Center.
• MT owns a 61-2 (.968) home conference record inside the Murphy Center under head coach Rick Insell, who took over the program prior to the 2005-06 campaign.
• The Blue Raiders' 37 home court conference winning streak was snapped with a 58-51 loss to FIU on Dec. 20. The streak was the longest in school history.

Nice Ice

• Senior Icelyn Elie posted her 13th career double-double and her first this season with 15 points and 13 rebounds in the loss at No. 7/6 Kentucky.
• The Lebanon product ranks 23rd with 534 rebounds and 21 away from tying Calita Elder (555) for 22nd.

New Record for Double-Doubles

• Junior forward Ebony Rowe set a new Middle Tennessee career record with her 39th double-double on Dec. 20. Against FIU, Rowe scored 19 points and corralled 12 rebounds as she surpassed Priscilla Robinson's 38 double-doubles set in 1994.
• Rowe became the quickest player in school history at MT to reach 39 double-doubles and is on pace to set the school record with double-figuring scoring, having reached that plateau 72 times out of 75 career games.

Insell Closer to All-Time Wins Mark

• Rick Insell now stands 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.

Tops in the Nation

• Junior Ebony Rowe ranks 7th in the NCAA with 39 career double-doubles among active players. Her total of 39 also leads all underclassmen in the nation.

Three is Key

• In four of Middle Tennessee's five losses, the Blue Raiders have shot less than 30 percent behind the arc. The Blue Raiders were held to 14 percent during the past two games. This season, MT is averaging 28.5 percent shooting (67-of-235) from three-point land. In contrast, MT is 4-1 when they are able to shoot 30 percent or higher from three-point range.

Converting Steals into Points

• The Raiders have registered double-digit steals in eight of 11 contests this year. In total, the Blue Raiders have been able to convert their opponent mistakes into 176 points for an average of 22 points per game when they convert 10 steals or more.

Rick Insell Live

Rick Insell Live presented by Ascend Federal Credit Union begins airing each Monday beginning on Jan. 7 at 6 p.m. The hour-long program will air on WGNS 1450 AM in Murfreesboro, WMOT 89.5 FM in Murfreesboro, WNSR 590 AM in Nashville and WDUC 93.9 FM in Tullahoma. The Voice of the Blue Raiders, Dick Palmer, will host the show each week.

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