MT starts road trip at Arkansas State Wednesday

Blue Raiders and Red Wolves square off in 7:05 tipoff

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Middle Tennessee (7-5, 2-1 Sun Belt) opens a two game road trip with a visit to Arkansas State (5-8, 2-2 SBC) on Wednesday, Jan. 2. Tipoff is set for 7:05 p.m. at the Convocation Center in Jonesboro, Ark.

GAME INFORMATION

Opponent: Arkansas State Red Wolves (5-8, 2-2 Sun Belt)
Date: Wednesday, Jan. 2, 2012
Time: 7:05 p.m.
Location: Jonesboro, Ark.
Arena: Convocation Center (13,900)

SERIES INFORMATION

Overall: MT leads series, 16-6
In Jonesboro: Series tied at 5-5
Last Meeting: MT 71, Arkansas State 62 - Jan. 18, 2012 - Murfreesboro, Tenn.
Under Rick Insell: 8-2

MEDIA INFORMATION

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

Quick Hitters

• Middle Tennessee (7-5, 2-1 Sun Belt) begins a two game road swing and plays three of its next

four games on the road. The Raiders came out victorious in a 66-64 win over North Texas on Dec. 27. Three Raiders reached double-figures as Ebony Rowe posted her 40th double-double (21p/11r) and Kortni Jones became the 27th player to reach 1,000 points at MT. Forward Icelyn Elie collected 15 points and is now 12 shy from entering the 1,000-point club.

• Coach Rick Insell (181) is just one win away from tying Lewis Bivens (182) for all-time wins at Middle Tennessee. Insell owns a .754 win percentage in eight seasons at the helm of the program.

• 11 of the 27 players in the 1,000-point club have played at least one season under Coach Insell.

• Three Raiders, each preseason First Team All-Sun Belt selections, are averaging double-figures in 12 games so far: Ebony Rowe (19.8), Icelyn Elie (13.7) and Kortni Jones (13.5).

• Ebony Rowe holds two school records at Middle Tennessee: career double-doubles (40) and offensive rebounds (397) ... The junior (1,307) is 28 points away from reaching MT's Top 15.

Game Notes

Scouting Arkansas State

• Arkansas State (5-8, 2-2 SBC) suffered a 53-47 loss at South Alabama last Saturday to snap a three-game win streak. Prior to that loss, the Red Wolves had won four out of their last five games. ASU knocked off Louisiana, 77-53, and opened SBC play this year with a 60-57 win at FIU. The Red Wolves also have non-conference win over Austin Peay, who the Raiders beat earlier this season. ASU is 4-2 at the Convocation Center this season.

The Red Wolves are scoring an average of 59.2 points per game in 13 contests. ASU is shooting a 41.8 percent clip (289-of-692) for second in the Sun Belt, while holding opponents under 40 percent at 38.6 percent (298-of-772).

Preseason All-Sun Belt selection Jane Morrill leads the Wolves as the only double-figures scorer with 15.9 points per game. The junior is also the leading rebounding, corralling 6.2 boards a contest. Ashley Olvera and Carlisha Wyatt are boasting 7.6 and 7.5 points per game, respectively. Olvera is the leading defensive threat with 22 steals this season.

Coach Brian Boyer is in his 14th season at the helm of the Arkansas State program. Since his arrival, the Red Wolves have collected a 216-193 record during that span. Coach Boyer is 5-15 all-time against the Blue Raiders with two of those wins against Coach Insell.

Series with the Red Wolves

• Middle Tennessee and Arkansas State meet for the 22nd time on Wednesday with the Raiders holding a decisive 16-6 lead.

• MT has never lost to ASU at the friendly confines of the Murphy Center. However, the Convocation Center has been a tougher environment with both programs even at 5-5.

• MT last lost to Arkansas State, 77-62, in the Sun Belt Conference Tournament on March 6, 2011. Arkansas State last defeated MT in the regular season, 70-68, on Jan. 14, 2008 in Jonesboro.

• MT picked up a 71-62 win over ASU last year at the Murphy Center as four Raiders reached double-figures. Ebony Rowe tallied a career-high 29 points in the victory.

• Coach Rick Insell is 8-2 all-time against ASU.

1,000-point Club Expanding

• Senior Kortni Jones became the 27th member of the illustrious 1,000-point club after scoring 21 versus North Texas. Jones now has 1,012 points in her career.

• Senior Icelyn Elie is 12 points shy, as she has accumulated 988 points in three-plus seasons.

• 11 of the 27 players in the 1,000-point club have played at least one season under Coach Insell.

Recapping the North Texas game

• Icelyn Elie's three-pointer with 14 seconds left was the difference, as Middle Tennessee secured a 66-64 win over North Texas at the Murphy Center. Elie finished the game with 15 points and six rebounds. Kortni Jones and Ebony Rowe each led all scorers on the night with 21 points. Jones eclipsed 1,000 career points in the first half and scored over 20 for the first time since registering 24 at Tennessee Tech. Rowe added 11 rebounds for her 40th double-double of her career. The Blue Raiders (7-5, 2-1 Sun Belt) won despite shooting just 39.4 percent (26-of-66) from the field. Middle Tennessee made up for an off-night shooting by forcing 25 North Texas (2-9, 1-1 Sun Belt) turnovers, turning those into 23 points. Midway in the second half, the two sides traded one-point leads until a Laken Leonard triple and an Elie fastbreak layup put Middle Tennessee in front 52-48. North Texas battled back and tied the game 61-61 on a Sara Stanley layup. Rowe broke the tie with 3:40 to play on a jumper in the lane, making the score 63-61. Stanley split a pair of free throws at the 1:56 mark to get the Mean Green within one, 63-62. With 41 seconds left, Bre Anna Dawkins drove to the basket and scored to give North Texas a one-point lead, 64-63. On Middle Tennessee's last possession, Rowe found Elie for the eventual game-winning three that made the score 66-64. North Texas had two chances to either tie the game or win it, but both shots fell short.

In Sun Belt Play

• Coach Rick Insell is a remarkable 108-13 against Sun Belt competition in the regular season.
• His win total ranks fifth in SBC history and his winning percentage (.892) 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.

Rowe Leading the Way

• Junior Ebony Rowe (1,307) ranks 15th all-time at MT in scoring and is on the verge of reaching the Top 15 with 28 more points. No. 15 is currently held by former Raider Tia Stovall (1,335).
• In 2011-12, Rowe joined Priscilla Robinson as the only Blue Raider to reach 1,000 in her sophomore campaign.
• The junior forward holds two school records in double-doubles (40) and offensive rebounds (397).
• Rowe is 110 rebounds shy of reaching third all-time in school history.
• She is four blocks away from reaching the top 10 in school history and is 10 defensive boards away from reaching the top 10.

Jones Making Historical Noise

• Senior Kortni Jones is in three Top 10 career categories at MT. The senior ranks third all-time with 592 3-point attempts. Her 388 assists ranks her eighth and she is six away from reaching seventh. Jones is sixth all-time with 200 made-triples. She became the 11th Raider to reach 1,000 points under Coach Insell.

Rowe Reaches New Heights

• Ebony Rowe broke the school record for offensive rebounds with her three grabs at South Dakota State. She now has 397 offensive boards in two-plus seasons.
• Rowe moved into fourth all-time at MT, passing former Raider Stephanie Capley with 777 rebounds. She is 110 away from reaching third all-time held by Hall of Famer Tawayna Mucker (1986-89).

Nice Ice

• Senior Icelyn Elie reached double-figures for the 50th time with 21 points against North Texas.
• The Lebanon product ranks 23rd with 540 rebounds and 15 away from tying Carlita Elder (555) for 22nd.

Set the Sights on 20

• Ebony Rowe has reached 20 points on 24 occasions during her career. MT is a remarkable 21-3 when she scores 20-plus points in a game.

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 73 times out of 76 career games.

Insell Closer to All-Time Wins Mark

• Rick Insell now stands one win 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 8th in the NCAA with 40 career double-doubles among active players. Her total of 40 also leads all underclassmen in the nation.

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.

National Statistical Rankings

• The Blue Raiders are in the top 50 in five statistical categories as released by the NCAA on Monday, Dec. 17. MT is 49th in steals per game (11.8), 56th in 3-pt field goals per game (6.4), 62nd

in turnover margin (+3.7), 74th in scoring offense (68.5 ppg) and 93rd in scoring margin (+7.6).

• Middle Tennessee has four players in the top 100. Rowe ranks 23rd with 19.8 points per game, 24th with 10.8 rebounds a contest and ninth with 6 double-doubles. Shanice Cason is 46th in steals per game (3.0), while Icelyn Elie is 67th in field goal percentage (50.8). Kortni Jones ranks 79th with 4.5 assists per game and is 82nd with 2.3 triples a contest.

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