Jones' last second layup propels Raiders over ASU

Icelyn Elie reaches 1,000-points; Insell ties all-time wins mark

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- Box Score (PDF)

JONESBORO, Ark. - Kortni Jones' layup with 6.1 seconds remaining gave Middle Tennessee another last second thriller as the Raiders edged Arkansas State, 72-70, on Wednesday evening at the Convocation Center.

Arkansas State (5-9, 2-3 Sun Belt) took a five point lead with 2:49 left in the game. The Raiders (8-5, 3-1 SBC), used an 8-to-1 run to seal their second consecutive win. Jones, a native of Oak Ridge, scored the six final points for Middle Tennessee. She finished with 20 points, seven assists and three steals on the evening.

Ebony Rowe anchored a season-high 27 points, shooting 13-of-16 from the field, while grabbing five rebounds. The Lexington native matched a career-high with 13 made field goals she set last season against ASU.

Icelyn Elie became the 28th Blue Raider to reach 1,000-points with her total of 16. The Lebanon native grabbed five rebounds, two blocks and two steals. There have been 12 Raiders to reach 1,000-points since Coach Rick Insell arrived in 2005.

Insell also set a historical marker, tying Coach Lewis Bivens with 182 career victories, setting the way to become the all-time wins leader with his next victory.

The Raiders dominated the paint with 50 of their 72 points inside. The Raiders shot 51 percent (33-of-63) from the field, despite only attempting six free throws compared to 28 for ASU. The Red Wolves knocked down 43 percent (21-of-49) from the field, while knocking down seven treys.

Middle Tennessee opened with a 12-4 lead in the first four minutes. Rowe paced the team with six

points, as the Raiders forced four turnovers during that span.

However, the Red Wolves soon found a rhythm and bounced back with a 9-0 run to take a 27-24 lead. A two minute drought from both teams was snapped when Elie hit a jumper underneath. Shanice Cason found a miracle with her jumper from near half court to help MT regain the lead. From there, Middle Tennessee hit two more triples to take a 35-31 edge. The Raiders closed the half with a 39-31 lead.

In the first half, MT shot 53 percent, hitting 18-of-34 from the field. Three-point shooting was off during the first seven attempts, but MT nailed three in a row to end the period. Rowe led all scorers with 18, while Elie followed with nine. Hanna Qedan had 12 points in the opening frame for ASU. She finished with 22 for the game.

Arkansas State started the second half on a big 11-4 run to eventually tie the game and take a 45-43 lead at the 16:38 mark.

From there, it was a back-and-forth game that saw the lead change 14 times. ASU went on a 6-2 run to take a five point lead with less than three minutes remaining. Jones took over using her athleticism underneath the basket. She hit a jumper with 46 seconds to go. ASU traveled to turn over the possession and give MT a final scoring attempt. Jones hit the game-winner with 6.1 seconds to go as MT improved to 17-6 all-time against ASU.

The road swing continues as Middle Tennessee visits South Alabama in a doubleheader matchup on Saturday, Jan. 5. Tip is set for 5:05 p.m. in Mobile, Ala.

NOTES:

Wednesday's victory tied Coach Rick Insell with Lewis Bivens for all-time wins with 182 at Middle Tennessee ... There were five jump balls called in the first half, the most in a game this season ... Icelyn Elie became the 28th member of the 1,000-point club with a her basket in the second half at 12:29 ... 12 of the 28 members in the MT 1,000-point club have played under Coach Rick Insell ... Kortni Jones reached seventh all-time in assists with 394 in her career, tying Jessica McLure ... Ebony Rowe is just one point shy of reaching No. 15 on the all-time scoring list ... The Blue Raiders are now 22-3 when Ebony Rowe reaches 20-plus points ... MT is 136-9 overall and 5-1 this year when scoring 70-plus points ... Middle Tennessee has played in seven games decided by 10 points or less this season.

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