Insell becomes WBB all-time wins leader with victory at USA

Rowe notches 41st double-double in win

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- PDF Box Score

MOBILE, Ala. - A pair of strong runs in the first half carried Middle Tennessee to a 60-39 win over South Alabama as Coach Rick Insell became the women's basketball program's all-time wins leader on Saturday evening at the Mitchell Center.

MT (9-5, 4-1 Sun Belt) started off the game on a 9-2 run and used a six minute Lady Jag (9-6, 2-4 SBC) scoring drought to add 11 more points and earn their third consecutive win.

Saturday's victory gave Rick Insell his 183rd win, surpassing the previous record of 182 set by Lewis Bivens in 1997. Insell, who holds a 183-59 overall mark in eight years, joined current MT men's basketball Coach Kermit Davis as an all-time wins leader. Middle Tennessee is just one of four schools (Gonzaga, Sacred Heart and UALR) to have both their current men's and women's basketball coaches as all-time wins leaders.

"It humbles you as a coach," said Insell. "When Dr. Sidney McPhee and Chris Massaro hired me, that record was the last thing on my mind. I didn't even think about that. Lewis Bivens, Larry Joe Inman and Stephany Smith all did great jobs of building the foundation of this program to be able to come in and have some success early. You have to look back at the players and the coaching staffs over the years. This record goes to me, but it really belongs to them."

Ebony Rowe managed her 41st career double-double with 26 points and 13 rebounds. Rowe grabbed nine offensive boards and picked up a pair of blocks and steals in 40 minutes. The Lexington, Ky., native moved into a tie for 14th in scoring at MT with Heather Prater.

Also reaching double figures was guard Kortni Jones with three triples and a free throw. Jones and Shanice Cason each had four assists. Senior forward Icelyn Elie narrowly missed double digits with

nine points and six rebounds.

MT was 42 percent from the field, knocking down 23-of-55 attempts, while making 10-of-16 from the charity stripe. The Raiders forced 19 South Alabama turnovers, converting 22 points in the process. The 11 Raider turnovers were the lowest for Middle Tennessee this season.

Rowe started the game scoring seven of MT's first nine points as the Raiders jumped out to a 9-2 lead. Midway through the half, the Raiders used a Rowe basket underneath combined with an Elie triple to give MT a 16-7 edge.

USA was held scoreless for six minutes in the half as the Raiders stretched their lead to 22-7. Jones hit a three-pointer at the end of the period to put MT up 32-16.

MT shot 40 percent (13-of-32) in the first half, while out-rebounding USA 20-to-14. USA was held to 6-of-20 from the field for 30 percent with 11 turnovers. Rowe led MT with 13 points and eight rebounds, while Veronica Cherizol had six points for the Lady Jags. Cherizol finished the game with a team-high 12 points.

In the second half, USA opened the half on a 5-0 run, but it was soon squashed. MT used buckets from all five players on the court to stretch its advantage to 42-24.

The Raiders continued to battle until the end with strong play finishing the game with 32 points in the paint as MT won its 18th consecutive game over South Alabama on Saturday.

NOTES

Lauren March earned her first starting nod since playing at Troy on Jan. 5, 2012 ... Ebony Rowe moved to No. 14 in scoring with her 26 points. She passed Tia Stovall (1,335) who played for the Raiders from 2003 to 2006 and is tied with Heather Prater (1,360) for No. 14 ... Rowe earned her 41st career double-double with 20 points and 12 rebounds ... Middle Tennessee is 23-3 when Rowe reaches 20-plus points ... With a win tonight, Coach Rick Insell became the all-time wins leader at MT with 183, passing Lewis Bivens previous standard of 182. Insell and Kermit Davis are now the all-time win leaders at MT, joining Gonzaga, Sacred Heart and UALR as the only other programs in the country to have both men's and women's basketball coaches active as all-time winners.

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