MT trounces Ragin' Cajuns for seventh straight win

Four Blue Raiders reach double-figures

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- Box Score (PDF)

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - A strong defensive effort combined with four Blue Raiders reaching double-figures propelled Middle Tennessee to a 72-36 win over Louisiana at the Murphy Center on Saturday afternoon.

MT (13-5, 8-1 Sun Belt) opened a 22 point run midway in the first half and took a 46-13 lead into the locker room. In the second half, the Blue Raiders opened with a 12-0 run to take a commanding lead and stretch their season-long win streak to seven games.

Offensively, Louisiana (7-12, 1-9 SBC) was held to 25 percent shooting (14-of-55). MT out rebounded the Cajuns, 50-to-34, while shooting 44 percent (28-of-63) from the field.

Lewisburg's Lauren March recorded career-highs in field goals made (5) and points (13) in a season-best 18 minutes of action. The junior also picked up four boards in the process.

Icelyn Elie was impressive throughout, scoring seven of the team's first 10 points and finishing the first half with 17. She had 20 for the game. Kortni Jones reached 13 points, including a trifecta of three-pointers.

For the 79th time in her career, Ebony Rowe reached double-figures with 10 points, including 4-of-5 from the field. Rowe grabbed eight rebounds and picked up a block and a steal. The double-digit scoring extended Rowe's streak to 26 consecutive games, which is the sixth longest in the NCAA.

Junior Janiece Johnson registered a career night on the boards, corralling eight rebounds. The Raiders had strong possession play with 16 assists. Jones and Shanice Cason each dished out four

assists.

Early in the contest, MT jumped out to a 12-7 lead. The Blue Raiders used a 22 point run that lasted over 10 minutes, allowing just one Louisiana field goal.

Additionally, Middle Tennessee allowed just seven points in the final 14 minutes and held their opponent to a season-low 13 first half points.
The Blue Raiders shot 49 percent at the break, knocking down 18-of-37 from the field. UL was subjected to 24 percent (5-of-21) during that span.

Middle Tennessee is back in action Thursday night with SBC West Division leader North Texas. Tip is scheduled for 5 p.m. in Denton, Texas.

NOTES

Janiece Johnson set a career-high with eight rebounds ... Louisiana's 13 point total in the first half was the lowest for a Blue Raider opponent this season ... Lauren March set a career-best with 13 points, passing her previous high of 11 set against Western Kentucky last season ... The 50 rebounds tied a team-best under coach Rick Insell. The Blue Raiders registered 50 boards in the win over UL on Jan. 7, 2012 ... MT is now 19-0 all-time against Louisiana, including 11-0 under Coach Insell ... The Blue Raiders are 7-1 this season when scoring 70 or more ... MT is 10-1 this year when holding opponents under 60.

QUOTES

Head Coach Rick Insell

Opening Statement

We haven't had many to these games this year, where you played everybody and had a comfortable lead. I was happy with our team today. We got the lead from the get-go, we executed. We didn't play the scoreboard. Everything that I asked for them to do in the huddle, they went out and did.
Just about every area of the game, I am happy with. We got to play everybody, and I am happy about that, too, because they have all been working hard.

On if this game was tough to get up for

We didn't take ULL for granted, and that is one of the things I am happy with. We didn't play down, and what I mean by that is when we got a 30-point lead, we didn't play down by running up and down the floor trying to do things that we couldn't do.

On the upcoming schedule

Our attitude now is going to be totally different because we have three tough games on the road. We go to North Texas on Thursday, and have the swing to FIU and FAU the following weekend. Those games are sandwiched around a home game with Western Kentucky, who is leading our side along with us, next Sunday. So we are going to find out a lot about our basketball team in the next four games.

Senior Guard Kortni Jones

On tonight's win

Coach has told us the past few days that UL was a team that could hit a few three's and get right back in the game, so we started the second half strong with ten straight points.

On the team's defensive play

This was a game that we focused on defense, trying to get some bad tendencies out of our system. I was pleased that that we got to play a lot of people today. When we hit the conference tournament, it is going to take more than the six or seven players that we usually play, so that was big.

On playing at North Texas next Thursday

North Texas will be a tough game. It is a hard place to play. I think we only won by two points there last year.

Senior Forward Icelyn Elie

On today's victory

Our main thing today was our focus. That was what coach wanted us to do. Usually we are the type of team that plays to the level of our competition, and I think we handled that pretty well tonight.

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