MT faces archrival WKU in SBC East showdown

Raiders look to extend eight-game win streak

January 26, 2013 · @MTAthletics

Longtime rival WKU visits Middle Tennessee on Sunday, Jan. 27 in a televised ESPN3 broadcast. Tipoff is set for 2 p.m. inside the Murphy Center.

GAME INFORMATION

Matchup: WKU (15-4, 8-2 Sun Belt) at Middle Tennessee (14-5, 9-1 SBC)
Date: Sunday, Jan. 27, 2013
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Location: Murfreesboro, Tenn.
Arena: Murphy Center (11,520)
Tickets: GoBlueRaiders.com or call 1-888-YES-MTSU
Promotion: True Blue Game

SERIES INFORMATION

Overall: MT leads series, 30-23
In Murfreesboro: MT leads series, 18-6
Last Meeting: MT 65, WKU 57 - March 4, 2012 - Sun Belt Tournament - Hot Springs, Ark.
Under Rick Insell: 15-3

MEDIA INFORMATION

Live Video: ESPN3.com
Play-by-Play: Chip Walters
Color Analyst: Kyle Turnham
Radio: WMOT (89.5 FM)/WGNS 1450 AM, 100.5 FM, 101.9 FM
Play-by-Play: Dick Palmer
Color Analyst: Duane Hickey
ESPN3 - Live Audio - Live Stats

QUICK HITTERS

• Middle Tennessee (14-5, 9-1 Sun Belt) puts its eight-game win streak on the line against archrival Western Kentucky (15-4, 8-2 SBC) on Sunday. Middle Tennessee and WKU meet for the 64th time with MT holding a 30-23 edge in the series.
• The Blue Raiders used a 13-0 run in the second half to secure a 60-47 win at North Texas. Kortni Jones registered 23 points, while Ebony Rowe reached her 44th double-double (22p/14r).
• Ebony Rowe has reached double-figure scoring in 27 consecutive games dating back to last season - the sixth longest streak in the nation. When she reaches 20 points or more, MT is 27-3.
• There are four Top 20 NCAA categories in which Rowe ranks. She is seventh in double-doubles (12), ninth in points (21.7), 13th in field goal percentage (56.3) and 18th in rebounds per game (11.2).
• Forward Ebony Rowe leads the Raiders with 21.7 points and 11.2 rebounds per game. Icelyn Elie (14.0) and Kortni Jones (13.4) are also averaging double-figures in 19 contests this season.
• MT has won eight straight games since Dec. 27. The streak ranks ninth in the NCAA.
• The Raiders lead the Sun Belt with an RPI of 54 with Western Kentucky following behind at 76.

Scouting WKU

• The Lady Toppers (15-4, 8-2 Sun Belt) are off to one of the best starts in program history by winning 15 of its first 19 games. WKU has won at least 15 of its first 19 games for the eighth time in program history.
• WKU is averaging 69.6 points per game, while shooting 42 percent (492-of-1172) from the field. The Lady Toppers are holding opponents to 63.1 points per game. Western Kentucky dropped a 56-46 decision at South Alabama on Wednesday. The Lady Toppers won a stretch of eight games that lasted from Dec. 6 until Jan. 3.
• Alexis Govan leads the Tops with 19.1 points per game. Chastity Gooch is a double-double machine for WKU, leading the nation with 16 this season. Gooch is averaging 16.4 points and 11.3 rebounds per game. She is shooting a 50 percent clip (132-of-263) from the field. Also averaging double-digits is Biance McGee with 14.5 points per game in 10 contests.

Series with the Lady Toppers

• The historic rivalry of Middle Tennessee and WKU women's basketball began in 1924-25. However, the first NCAA sanctioned meeting occurred on Feb. 26, 1977 with the Raiders capturing an 89-81 victory at home. MT holds a 30-23 edge in the series since it began in 1977.
• MT has won a series-long 10 consecutive games since Jan. 14, 2009. The Raiders' last loss to WKU was a 65-49 defeat to WKU in the Sun Belt Tournament Championship on March 11, 2008. MT last dropped a home game to the Lady Toppers on Feb. 5, 2004 (L, 68-70 in double OT). Rick Insell's squads have never lost to WKU at home.
• Last season, the Blue Raiders picked up three wins, including a narrow 67-64 win at the Murphy Center on Feb. 8, 2012.
• One ironic twist is that the two programs met exactly 34 years ago in Bowling Green on Jan. 27, 1979 with MT winning, 86-79.

True Blue

Fans are encouraged to wear blue as the Raiders in Sunday's rivalry game with WKU. Sunday's

game is sponsored by Tennessee Pork Producers. Other sponsors on hand with giveaways this weekend include: Tennessee National Guard, Academy Sports & Outdoors, Cellular Concepts, Northwestern Mutual, The Grove Apartments, Entersource, Tennessee Starts 529, Purity Dairy, Tigermarket, Marco's Pizza, Sonic, Toot's and Jack in the Box.

In Sun Belt Play

• Coach Rick Insell has a remarkable 115-13 against Sun Belt competition in the regular season. His win total ranks fifth in SBC history and his winning percentage (.898) 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.
• During the past two seasons, MT has won 25 out of its' last 26 regular season SBC games.
• MT has won a school-record 12 consecutive conference road games dating back to last season.

Soaring in Attendance

• MT women's basketball has accumulated remarkable numbers in attendance so far this season. The Raiders are averaging 4,339 fans per game after nine home affairs. MT welcomed its' second largest crowd in school history with 10,107 against APSU on Dec. 4.
• This season, Middle Tennessee is 20th nationally in attendance per game and up 35 percent from a year ago.

RPI Pacesetters

• The Raiders lead the Sun Belt with an RPI of 54 as released on Monday. At this point last season, MT held an RPI of 47.
• MT's conference record RPI is 13th nationally after posting a 9-1 record in league play.

Earning Votes

• The Blue Raiders are back receiving votes in the USA Today Sports/ESPN Coaches Poll released on Monday, Jan. 22. MT earned seven votes good for 29th overall behind Michigan, Kansas and Nebraska. Earlier this year, MT reached as high as 28th in the Coaches' Poll.

A Sizeable Victory

• The Blue Raiders have increased the margin of victory recently with five out of its last six wins in double-figure margins. MT has averaged a +16 during that span, including a 13-point win at North Texas on Thursday.
• During the Raiders' season-long eight game win streak, MT has tallied a 41.8 field goal percentage or higher in five of eight contests.

Scoring Machines

• There are three MT players that have notched 1,000 points during their respective careers.
• Ebony Rowe reached 1,000 last season and currently is 11th with 1,481 points.
• Oak Ridge's Kortni Jones hit 1,000 points with her 21 against North Texas (Dec. 27) and ranks 22nd with 1,104 points.

• Icelyn Elie became the 28th addition by reaching the 1,000 plateau at Arkansas State on Jan. 2. She has reached 1,090 in her career.

Just Jones'

• Senior Kortni Jones is in the Top 10 in three career categories at MT.
• She ranks third at MT with 653 3-pt attempts.
• Her 424 assists puts her fifth all-time, while she is fifth all-time with 218 triples.
• The Oak Ridge native is tied for ninth all-time in the Sun Belt with 218 triples, joining three other Blue Raiders that currently sit in the Top 10 in conference history.
• Jones leads the Sun Belt with 4.6 assists per game and is 71st nationally.
• She set a school and league record with 21 triple attempts at North Texas on Jan. 24.

Raiders Rowe

• Junior Ebony Rowe (1,481) is 11th all-time at MT in scoring and is 16 points away from reaching 10th, currently held by Amber Holt.
• 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 (44) and offensive rebounds (435).
• Her 68 career blocks ranks ninth all-time.
• She has scored double-figures in 27 consecutive games, which is the sixth longest streak nationally.

At Home Under Insell

• Middle Tennessee holds a daunting 98-11 record under Coach Rick Insell inside the friendly confines of the Murphy Center.
• MT owns a 65-2 (.970) 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.

Icelyn in her Veins

• Senior Icelyn Elie reached double-figures for the 56th time at North Texas. She inked her 14th career double-double with 15 points and 10 rebounds at ULM on Jan. 12th.
• The Lebanon product ranks 21st all-time at MT in career rebounding with 589.

Journey Through January

• Coach Rick Insell's squad is 7-0 this month. Since his arrival in 2005-06, the Blue Raiders are 62-6 in the month of January.
• MT has not lost a game in the first month since dropping a 62-59 decision at FIU on Jan. 29, 2011.

Scouring the Sun Belt

• Middle Tennessee is second in the league with a +9.7 scoring margin and is second with a +3.95 turnover margin through 19 games. Junior Ebony Rowe leads the SBC with 5.6 offensive rebounds

per game. Rowe is second in points (21.7), rebounds (11.2) and minutes played (38.9). Guard Kortni Jones leads the SBC with 4.6 assists and is second with 2.4 triples made per game. Shanice Cason is third with 2.67 steals each contest.

National Statistical Rankings

• The Raiders are in the top 100 in seven statistical categories as released by the NCAA on Jan. 25. MT is 46th in turnover margin (+3.95), 58th in scoring margin (+9.7), 74th in scoring defense (57.2), 89th in scoring offense (66.8), 95th in steals per game (10.1), 97th in FG percentage (40.7) and 99th in rebounding margin (+3.2).
• MT has three players in the top 100. Ebony Rowe ranks ninth with 21.7 points per game, 18th with 11.2 rebounds a contest and ninth with 12 double-doubles. Rowe is 13th in field goal percentage (56.3). Kortni Jones ranks 71st with 4.6 assists per game. Shanice Cason ranks 93rd with 2.67 steals per game.

Sun Belt Tournament Championships

Tickets are now available for the Sun Belt Championship in Hot Springs, Ark. All-session booklets are $83 and fans can purchase by calling 1-888-YES-MTSU or clicking here.

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