MT opens Florida swing at FIU

Raiders' and Panthers tip at 4:30 p.m. CT Thursday

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The Middle Tennessee women's basketball looks to avenge their only conference loss so far this season when the Blue Raiders visit FIU on Thursday. The game is slated to start at 4:30 p.m. CT at U.S. Century Bank Arena in Miami, Fla.

GAME INFORMATION

Matchup: Middle Tennessee(15-5, 10-1 Sun Belt) at FIU (13-7, 7-4 SBC)
Date: Thursday, Jan. 31, 2013
Time: 4:30 p.m. CT
Location: Miami, Fla.
Arena: U.S. Century Bank Arena (5,000)

SERIES INFORMATION

Overall: MT leads series, 17-9
Under Rick Insell: 12-4
In Miami: MT leads series, 7-5
Last Meeting: FIU 58, MT 51 - Dec. 28, 2012 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

• The Blue Raiders (15-5, 10-1 Sun Belt) take a nine-game win streak to Florida this week. MT's last loss came at the hand of FIU on Dec. 20 when the Panthers knocked off MT in Murfreesboro, 58-51.
• Middle Tennessee defeated rival WKU, 79-57, last Sunday to take a two game lead in the Sun Belt East division. Kortni Jones inked a career-high 28 points, while fellow senior Icelyn Elie added 22.
• Forward Ebony Rowe garnered her 45th double-double of her career and the 13th of the season with 13 points and 12 rebounds against the Lady Toppers. Rowe was named the TSWA Player of

the Week after averaging 17.5 points and 12.5 rebounds in victories over North Texas and WKU.
• Rowe reached double-figure scoring in 28 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 (13), 10th in points (21.3), 16th in rebounds (11.2) and 19th in field goal percentage (54.9).
• Ebony Rowe leads the Raiders with 21.3 points and 11.2 rebounds per game. Icelyn Elie (14.4) and Kortni Jones (14.1) are also averaging double-figures in 20 contests this season.

Scouting FIU

• The Panthers (13-7, 7-4 Sun Belt) have won three straight games and three out of their last four contests. FIU escaped with a 64-63 overtime win at Louisiana on Jan. 23, before knocking out South Alabama, 50-46, in Mobile.
• In 20 games this season, FIU is boasting 61.5 points and shooting at a 41 percent clip (461x1127). Rebounding has been a major strong point for FIU, as the Panthers hold a +7.7 rebounding margin this season. Defensively, the squad has 77 blocks and giving up an average of 58.8 points per contest.
• Junior Jerica Coley, the preseason SBC Player of the Year, leads the nation in scoring with 24.7 points per game. Coley posted over 30 points in wins at UL and USA last weekend. She has made 175-of-397 from the field for 44 percent, while dishing out a team-best 75 assists. Coley has a team-best 42 steals with 36 blocks.
• Also joining Coley in double figures is Marita Davydova with 10.3 points per contest. The center is FIU's leading rebounder with 8.2 boards per contest.

Series with the Panthers

• The Blue Raiders have won eight of the last 10 meetings with the Panthers. Middle Tennessee leads the overall series 17-9.
• FIU holds a slight 7-5 edge in this series in Miami. However, since Coach Rick Insell arrived in 2005, the Raiders are 4-3 at U.S. Century Bank Arena.
• Earlier this season, the Panthers held the Middle Tennessee under 33 percent shooting and out-rebounded the Raiders by 10 to pick up a 58-51 win on Dec. 20. Jerica Coley led FIU with 23 points, while Ebony Rowe set the school record with double-doubles (19p/12r).
• The Blue Raiders last defeated the Panthers 63-53 in the semifinals of last season's Sun Belt Tournament.
• Coach Cindy Russo is in her 34th season at the helm of the FIU program with a 643-336 record. She is the all-time wins leader among current Sun Belt Conference coaches. Russo is 9-17 all-time against MT.

In Sun Belt Play

• Coach Rick Insell has a remarkable 116-13 against Sun Belt competition in the regular season. His win total ranks fifth in SBC history and his winning percentage (.899) is second all-time behind Louisiana Tech's Leon Barmore.
• The Blue Raiders' 37 conference home game winning streak was snapped on Dec. 20 with a 58-51 loss to FIU.
• During the past two seasons, MT has won 26 out of its' last 27 regular season SBC games.

RPI Rises

• Middle Tennessee's RPI has continued to rise and has the highest rating in the Sun Belt. On Monday, Jan. 28, the Raiders moved up six spots to No. 48.
• There are two other Sun Belt teams with RPIs in the Top 100: WKU (75) and FIU (95).
• MT's conference record RPI is 13th nationally after posting a 10-1 record in league play.

Raiders Picking Up Votes

• For the second straight week, Middle Tennessee earned votes in the USA Today Sports/ESPN Coaches' poll released on Tuesday, Jan. 29. MT grabbed 18 votes and sits 28th behind Iowa (25), Villanova (26) and Delaware (27). The Raiders matched their highest peak of 28 set during week one.

Statistically Streaking

• MT's nine-game win streak is currently the seventh longest streak nationally.
• The Blue Raiders have increased the margin of victory recently with six out of its last seven wins in double-figure margins. MT has averaged a +19 during that span, including 22-point win over rival WKU last Sunday.
• During the Raiders' season-long nine game win streak, MT has tallied a 41.8 field goal percentage or higher in six of nine contests.
• Ebony Rowe has averaged 23.1 points, 11.6 rebounds and shot 62 percent during the win streak. Meanwhile, Kortni Jones is posting 15.7 ppg and Icelyn Elie has 15.4 during that span.

Road Warriors

• The Blue Raiders set a new school record with 12 consecutive conference road wins dating back to last season. MT went unblemished in league play last year and have been unharmed on the road in four road games this season.
• The previous conference road win streak of 10 started on Jan. 20, 2010 at ULM and ended with a loss to FIU on Jan. 29, 2011.

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 1,494 points.
• Oak Ridge's Kortni Jones hit 1,000 points with her 21 against North Texas (Dec. 27) and ranks 22nd with 1,132 points.
• Icelyn Elie became the 28th addition by reaching the 1,000 plateau at Arkansas State on Jan. 2. She has reached 1,112 in her career.

Journey Through January

• Coach Rick Insell's squad is 8-0 this month. Since his arrival in 2005-06, the Blue Raiders are 63-6 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 leads the league with a +10.3 scoring margin and is second with a +3.70 turnover margin through 20 games. Junior Ebony Rowe leads the SBC with 5.6 offensive rebounds per game. Rowe is second in points (21.3), rebounds (11.2) and minutes played (39.0). Guard Kortni Jones leads the SBC with 4.5 assists and is second with 2.4 triples made per game. Shanice Cason is third in the league with 2.65 steals each contest.

National Statistical Rankings

• The Raiders are in the top 100 in seven statistical categories as released by the NCAA on Jan. 28. MT is 51st in turnover margin (+3.70), 54th in scoring margin (+10.3), 77th in scoring defense (57.2), 80th in steals per game (10.3), 82nd in FG percentage (41.1), 83rd in scoring offense (67.4), and 95th in rebounding margin (+3.3).
• MT has three players in the top 100. Ebony Rowe ranks 10th with 21.3 points per game, 16th with 11.2 rebounds a contest and tied for seventh with 13 double-doubles. Rowe is 19th in field goal percentage (54.9), while Icelyn Elie is listed 59th (48.6). Kortni Jones ranks 72nd with 4.5 assists per game. Shanice Cason ranks 73rd with 2.65 steals per game.

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