MT survives hot-shooting Owls to pick up 11th straight win

Jones paces Raiders with 20 points

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Box Score (PDF)

BOCA RATON, Fla. - Middle Tennessee fought back from a 10 point deficit and used six points down the stretch from Kortni Jones as the Blue Raiders downed Florida Atlantic, 70-67, at FAU Arena on Saturday afternoon.

Florida Atlantic (10-11, 7-6 Sun Belt), the league's top scoring offense, held a lead for 34 minutes. The Owls banked an opponent-best nine triples to keep ahead. The Blue Raiders (17-5, 12-1 SBC) used a 20-to-7 run in the final five-plus minutes to pick up their 11th straight win and remain in first place in the SBC East division.

Midway in the second half, MT used a 10-to-2 run, cutting FAU's lead to two. Ebony Rowe's free throw at 5:28 tied the game at 62-62. Florida Atlantic retook the lead when Kimberly Smith knocked down her fourth triple. From there, the Owls were held scoreless for nearly five minutes. Icelyn Elie's layup with 1:56 left put Middle Tennessee ahead, 66-65. Murfreesboro's Shanice Cason snatched a steal with 28 seconds left, forcing the Owls to foul. Jones hit four straight free throws to seal the victory.

Jones finished the game with 20 points including nine from the charity stripe. The senior picked up four assists and a steal in 37 minutes. Rowe earned her 30th consecutive game in double-figures with 16 points and eight rebounds. She was 8-of-10 from the free throw line, while picking up two blocks.

The senior Elie added 12 points and eight rebounds as she shot 50 percent (5-of-10) from the field. Laken Leonard registered 10 points, going a perfect 4-of-4 from the field.

MT made 23-of-52 from the field for 44 percent, including 50 percent (7-of-14) from the field. FAU hit

an opponent-high nine triples and went 25-of-58 from the field for 43 percent. Rebounds in the game were tied at 33. Chenise Miller, the league's third leading rebounder, was held to zero boards and 13 points.

To open the game, Florida Atlantic took a 13-6 lead and went on an 11-3 run to stretch their advantage. Latavia Dempsey's trey at 5:59 gave FAU a 10 point edge.

Middle Tennessee fought back with the final 17 points of the half coming from Elie and Rowe. Elie scored a basket and converted on a plus-one to help MT cut their deficit to five. On the next offensive possession, Elie hit her first triple to put the Raiders within two. FAU followed up with a triple to go up 39-34 at the break.

Rowe paced the Raiders with 12 points and six rebounds, while Takia Brooks had 11 for Florida Atlantic. Offensively, the Owls shot 52 percent (15-of-29), including 5-of-10 from 3-point range. MT shot at a 47 percent clip (12-of-26), knocking down three triples. The Owls held an arrow 17-14 edge in rebounds.

In the second half, Middle Tennessee utilized a 10-2 run to tie the game. Elie's layup combined with four freebies sealed the sixth win for the Raiders in Boca Raton.

The Blue Raiders return home for Faculty & Staff appreciation night on Wednesday, Feb. 6 against Arkansas State. Tipoff is set for 7 p.m. at the Murphy Center. All MT faculty staff members can receive a discounted ticket with a valid ID.

NOTES

Ebony Rowe moved to ninth all-time with 1,533 points, passing Krystle Horton's 1,523 ... Rowe reached double-figures for the 30th consecutive game ... Kortni Jones, Icelyn Elie and Ebony Rowe all tallied double-figures for the sixth consecutive game ... Middle Tennessee improves to 14-1 overall against FAU.

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