Holmes Leads Lady Raiders to 77-54 Win

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Freshman Patrice Holmes poured in a career-high 26 points and grabbed eight rebounds and Jamie Thomatis added 19 points to lead Middle Tennessee to a 77-54 victory over New Orleans in the conference opener for both teams Saturday afternoon at the Murphy Center. Holmes led four double figure scorers for the Lady Raiders (7-5) in leading the club in scoring for the second straight contest. The Bishopville, S.C., native equaled her career best with 23 points in Middle Tennessee's last outing, a win at Xavier six days ago. Holmes scored 15 points in the first half in just 10 minutes of playing time, making five of her six shots in the period, including a pair of three-pointers. She made another three-pointer in the second half and grabbed all eight of her rebounds after halftime. The Lady Raiders held a 33-27 advantage at halftime and opened a 43-32 lead just over four minutes into the second half. But the visiting Privateers (3-9) scored 12 of the next 14 points in the contest, including a pair of three-pointers from Jasmine Smiri, cutting the Lady Raider lead to 45-44 with 12:27 to go in the game. Middle Tennessee then outscored UNO, 11-2, over the next 5:13, with Holmes making two buckets and Thomatis knocking down a three-pointer to end the run. The

Privateers never got closer than eight after that, giving the Lady Raiders a win in the conference opener and the team's second straight victory. The loss was the eighth straight defeat for the Privateers. Jennifer Justice had 10 points, all in the first half, and Tiffany Fisher had a career-high 10 points off the bench for the Lady Raiders. Thomatis and Paula Penttila both had a game-high five assists. Yolanda White led the Privateers with 16 points and nine rebounds, while Lora Ruddy added 12 and Smiri had 10. Jessica Dunham grabbed eight boards in the defeat. The Lady Raiders play their final non-conference road contest of the season Wednesday with a 5 p.m. contest at Memphis. Middle Tennessee continues conference play next Saturday with a 2 p.m. contest against Florida International at the Murphy Center.

GAME NOTES

HOLMES SET ANOTHER CAREER-HIGH: Freshman guard Patrice Holmes scored a career-high 26 points in today's contest, surpassing her previous high of 23 points. Holmes went 9-for-16 from the field and made three trifectas in the contest. She also added a team-high eight rebounds. Holmes had 15 points at halftime. **FISHER SETS CAREER-HIGH OFF BENCH:** Freshman Tiffany Fisher scored a career-high 10 points off the bench for the Lady Raiders. Fisher made two three-pointers in the contest after making just one in eight previous games this season. The Jackson, Tenn., native was 4-for-8 from the floor in the game in 12 minutes of action. **THOMATIS MOVED UP CAREER LISTS:** Senior Jamie Thomatis continues to move up the Lady Raider career records. Thomatis tied Jennifer McFall (1982-85) for fourth on the career free throws attempted list in today's contest after taking seven foul shots in the contest. Thomatis now has attempted 475 career free throws. The Destrehan, La., native moved past Sharon McClanahan (1976-79) into fifth on the field goals made list, making seven shots in the win over New Orleans. Thomatis now has 613 career field goals. The Ursuline Academy product also moved into a tie for 13th on the career rebounding list with Sherry Tucker (1992-95) with 579 career boards.

THIS -N' THAT: Jamie Thomatis started her 50th straight game against New Orleans - Jennifer Justice made her fifth straight start this season against the Privateers - Paula Penttila started her 10th straight game of the season and the 37th in the last 40 Lady Raider contests dating to last season - Jamie Thomatis netted 19 points, her 25th straight contest with double figures - Patrice Holmes had her fourth straight double figure game against the Privateers with 26 points - Paula Penttila set a season-high with four rebounds - Jennifer Justice had her third double figure game of the season with 10 points, all in the first half, and had season-high in FT made (4) and FT attempts (6) and tied a season-high with four steals - Tiffany Fisher set season-highs in points (10), FG made (4), FG attempts (8), 3-pt. FG made (2) and 3-pt. FG attempts (4) - Patrice Holmes set season-highs in points (26), 3-pt. FG made (3), FT made (5) and FT attempts (5) - Jamie Thomatis tied a season-high with five assists - Joanne Aluka tied a season-high with two assists - The Lady Raiders are now 56-11 under Stephany Smith when holding the opposition to less than 70 points - Smith-coaches squads are now 33-15 when scoring between 70 and 79 points - The Lady Raiders improved to 43-14 under Stephany Smith at the Murphy Center.

GAME QUOTES

MT Head Coach Stephany Smith

"UNO head coach Joey Favaloro has had a tough run, with losing three starters, so we knew they had problems coming into the game. However, UNO played a tremendous game today and really gave us a lot of trouble until the eight-minute mark in the second half. Our goal at the half, with nine turnovers in the first half, was to hold ourselves to 15 turnovers and UNO to 50 points. Well, we finished the game with 13 turnovers and they had 54 points. Even though I am pleased with us shooting 43 percent in the game, we still missed too many lay-ups and easy two-point plays."

MT Guard Patrice Holmes

"We really worked hard on defense and played with intensity today. Coach told us at halftime we had to hold onto the ball and cut down on our turnovers to take control of the game."

UNO Head Coach Joey Favaloro

"We played 30 minutes of really good basketball and then took a nap. Having three starters out because of injuries has really hurt us. We opened up the game in a zone and I think that really shut down Middle Tennessee's best player, Jamie Thomatis. She has trouble shooting over the zone, but at the end we just weren't guarding her and she ran all over us."

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