

MT opens final homestand with South Alabama

ESPN3 broadcast set to begin at 7 p.m.

February 19, 2013 · @MTAthletics

Middle Tennessee women's basketball opens its final homestand of the season against South Alabama on Wednesday, Feb. 20. The game is set for a 7 p.m. tipoff and will air live on ESPN3.

GAME INFORMATION

Matchup: South Alabama (14-11, 7-9 Sun Belt) at Middle Tennessee (18-7, 13-3 SBC)

Date: Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2013

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Arena: Murphy Center (11,520)

Tickets: Click [here](#) or call 1-888-YES-MTSU



SERIES INFORMATION

Overall: MT leads series, 20-4

Under Rick Insell: 16-0

In Murfreesboro: MT leads series, 9-1

Last Meeting: MT 60, USA 39 - Jan. 5, 2013 - Mobile, Ala.

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

[Live Video](#) - [Live Audio](#) - [Live Stats](#)

Sun Belt Tournament Booklets on Sale

The 2013 Sun Belt Conference basketball tournament ticket booklets are now on-sale through the Blue Raider ticket office. Taking place in beautiful Hot Springs, Arkansas at the Summit Arena, each booklet is only \$83 and includes a ticket to every game from March 8-11.

Currently, both Blue Raider basketball teams are in first place in the conference standings and inching closer to dual-births in the NCAA tournament. But they need your help. The Blue Raider athletic department invites you to invade Hot Springs with us and show both basketball teams your support as they make a postseason run. All seats are general admission. However, when MTSU is playing, a block of seats are located behind the team bench.

You can purchase your booklets in one of three ways; online at GoBlueRaiders.com, by visiting the Blue Raider ticket office at Gate 1A of Floyd Stadium, or by calling 615-898-5198.

Quick Hitters

- Middle Tennessee (18-7, 13-3) is coming off a tough 51-43 loss at UALR on Saturday. Ebony Rowe paced the Blue Raiders with 14 points and eight rebounds. Icelyn Elie and Kortni Jones added 12 points each in the loss. The two back-to-back conference losses are the first for the Raiders since dropping games at FIU/UALR in Feb. 2008.
- Ebony Rowe leads the Raiders with 21.0 points and 10.7 rebounds per game. Kortni Jones follows with 15.1 and Icelyn Elie with 14.1 points per game in 25 contests this season.
- There are four Top 25 NCAA categories in which Ebony Rowe ranks. She is 13th in double-doubles (14), 14th in points (21.0), 16th in field goal percentage (55.1) and 25th in rebounds per game (10.7).
- Rowe joins Rice's Jessica Kuster as the only two juniors in the country to average a double-double through their first three years in the collegiate ranks.

Scouting South Alabama

- South Alabama (14-11, 7-9 Sun Belt) has won two out of its last three games, including a 53-39 win over Louisiana on Feb. 13. USA snapped a three-game losing skid with a 74-58 victory against Troy on Feb. 6. USA is averaging 56.7 points per game and is second in the league in defense, giving up 54.2 points per game. From the field, USA is shooting 37 percent (523-of-1411), while opponents are knocking down 39 percent (533-of-1372).
- Senior guard Mary Nixon is USA's only double-figure scorer with 11.4 points per game. Preseason All-Conference selection Mansa El is posting 9.2 points per game and leads USA with 71 assists. Meghan Dunn is the top three-point threat for South Alabama, hitting a team-best 38 this season. Ronneka Robertson is averaging 7.3 rebounds per game, while Veronica Cherizol is tallying 6.4 per contest.
- Coach Rick Pietri is in his 13th season at South Alabama with a career record of 217-165. He is 2-18 all-time against the Blue Raiders. Pietri's last victory against MT came on Jan. 16, 2003 when his squad upended the Raiders 72-58 in Mobile.

Series with the Lady Jags

- Middle Tennessee and South Alabama square off for the 25th time on Saturday. MT holds a 20-4

lead in the series, with two of the four losses occurring on a neutral court. The Raiders have won 18 consecutive games dating back to 2004.

- On Jan. 5, 2013, Middle Tennessee collected a 60-39 win over USA in Mobile. Ebony Rowe paced MT with 26 points and 13 rebounds, while Kortni Jones added 10. Coach Rick Insell became the school's all-time wins leader for women's basketball with the victory.
- Last season, MT picked up a 60-39 win over USA at the Murphy Center before closing the bookend of last year's series with a 60-53 win in Mobile. Kortni Jones led the way in the first meeting with 20 points, while Icelyn Elie paced the Raiders with 17 in the victory at USA.
- Coach Rick Insell holds a 16-0 career mark against South Alabama since his arrival in 2005.

In Sun Belt Play

- Rick Insell is a remarkable 119-15 against Sun Belt competition in the regular season. His win total ranks fourth in the SBC and his winning percentage (.888) is second all-time behind Louisiana Tech's Leon Barmore.
- During the past two seasons, MT has won 29 out of its' last 32 regular season SBC games.

A Winning Combination

- The Middle Tennessee men's and women's basketball programs have combined for 41 wins this season, which is tied for sixth nationally. Gonzaga leads the country with 45 combined wins this season.

Looking at RPI

- Middle Tennessee's RPI rates as the best among Sun Belt competition. The Blue Raiders boast a No. 53 ranking as of Monday, Feb. 19.
- There are only two other league programs in the Top 100 of RPI: UALR (81) and Western Kentucky (87)

Statistically Streaking

- The Raiders have averaged a margin of +13 points per game during the last 14 games.
- MT has shot 43 percent from the field, while averaging 67.9 points per contest.
- Rowe, Jones and Elie are all boasting above their regular season averages during the past 14 games. Rowe is pacing MT with 22 points, followed by Jones with 16.9 and Elie with 14.5 per game.

At Home Under Insell

- Middle Tennessee holds a daunting 100-12 record under Coach Rick Insell inside the friendly confines of the Murphy Center.
- MT owns a 67-3 (.957) home conference record inside the Murphy Center under head coach Rick Insell, who took over the program prior to the 2005-06 campaign.

Sun Belt Tournament Outlook

- Middle Tennessee holds a two game lead in the Sun Belt East division with four games remaining. The Blue Raiders also lead the conference with a record of 13-3 in league play this season.
- The No. 1 overall seed will play the winner of the No. 8 vs. No. 9 seed on Saturday, March 9 at

Noon.

Experience Pays Off

- Middle Tennessee's Icelyn Elie, Kortni Jones and Ebony Rowe have all reached double-figures in 10 out of the last 14 games.
- Rowe has shot 60 percent during that 14 game stretch. Meanwhile, Kortni Jones has reached 20 or more points in five out of the last seven games. On the boards, Icelyn Elie has registered five or more rebounds in 14 consecutive contests.
- The tandem has put together 3,998 points in 9,527 minutes of action in a combined 316 games played.

Ebony Rowe All-America Campaign

- The MT Athletic Communications office rolled out the Ebony Rowe for All-America campaign.
- MT Athletics launched a Twitter account (@RaidersRowe) for fans and media to follow on the junior's progress this season, while encouraging followers to use the #RaidersRowe hashtag.
- An interactive website, RaidersRowe.com, highlights Rowe's academic and athletic successes since she joined the program.

Soaring in Attendance

- MT women's basketball has accumulated remarkable numbers in attendance so far this season. The Raiders are averaging 4,057 fans per game after 12 home affairs. MT welcomed its' second largest crowd in school history with 10,107 against APSU on Dec. 4.
- This season, Middle Tennessee is 23rd nationally in attendance per game and up 35 percent from a year ago.

Rankings in the Sun Belt

- Middle Tennessee leads the Sun Belt with 15.2 offensive rebounds per game. MT is second in four other categories: scoring margin (+10), assists per game (13.2), turnover margin (+3.84), and assist/turnover ratio (0.81). Junior Ebony Rowe leads the SBC with 5.3 offensive rebounds per game and a 55.1 field goal percentage. Rowe is second in points (21.0), rebounds (10.7) and minutes played (39.2). Guard Kortni Jones leads the SBC with 4.5 assists and is third with 2.3 triples made per game. Shanice Cason is third with 2.4 steals per game.

National Statistical Rankings

- The Raiders are in the top 75 in three categories as released by the NCAA on Feb. 19. MT is 42nd in turnover margin (+3.84), 47th in scoring margin (+10) and 73rd in scoring offense (67.4 ppg).
- MT has four players in the top 100. Ebony Rowe ranks 14th with 21 points per game, 25th with 10.7 rebounds a contest and tied for 13th with 14 double-doubles. Rowe is 16th in field goal percentage (55.1), while Icelyn Elie is listed 76th (46.9). Kortni Jones ranks 63rd with 2.3 triples per game and is 77th with 4.5 assists. Shanice Cason is 97th in the NCAA with 2.4 steals.

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