Blue Raiders visit Troy in Thursday doubleheader

Raiders clinch SBC regular season title

February 27, 2013 · @MTAthletics

The Middle Tennessee women's basketball team looks to avenge an overtime loss to Troy on Thursday, Feb. 28. Tipoff is set for 5:15 p.m. at Trojan Arena in Troy, Ala.

GAME INFORMATION

Matchup: Middle Tennessee (20-7, 15-3 Sun Belt) at Troy (6-21, 3-15 SBC)
Date: Thursday, Feb. 28, 2013
Time: 5:15 p.m.
Location: Troy, Ala.
Arena: Trojan Arena (5,200)

SERIES INFORMATION

Overall: MT leads series, 16-1
Under Rick Insell: 14-1
In Troy: MT leads series, 7-0
Last Meeting: Troy 74, MT 70 OT - Feb. 10, 2013 - Murfreesboro, Tenn.

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

• Middle Tennessee (20-7, 15-3 Sun Belt) closes out the 2012-13 regular season on the road with visits to Troy and Western Kentucky. The Blue Raiders have won two in a row, including a 74-53 victory over ULM last Saturday. Kortni Jones paced the Raiders with 30 points, while Icelyn Elie notched a double-double with 15 points and 11 rebounds. Freshman Caroline Warden set a season-high with 16 points.
• MT won the regular season title as WKU fell to South Alabama on Wednesday evening. The Blue

Raiders join Green Bay, Gonzaga, Marist and Stanford as the only active teams to have won five or more consecutive regular season titles.
• Ebony Rowe leads the Raiders with 20.2 points and 10.7 rebounds per game. Kortni Jones follows with 15.6 and Icelyn Elie with 14 points per game in 27 contests this season.
• There are four Top 25 NCAA categories in which Ebony Rowe ranks. She is 14th in double-doubles (15), 16th in points (20.2), 18th in field goal percentage (54.6) and 22nd in rebounds per game (10.7).

Scouting Troy

• Troy (6-21, 3-15) comes in after two road losses at Louisiana and Arkansas State last week. However, prior to those two losses the Trojans had won two of three, including a 74-70 overtime win at Middle Tennessee.
• The Trojans are boasting one of the nation's top offenses with 71.4 points per game. Troy is shooting 39 percent (696-of-1746) from the field, while giving up 43 percent (772-of-1818) to opponents.
• Junior guard Joanna Harden leads the Trojans with 15.4 points per contest. Ashley Beverley-Kelley is boasting 12.3 points per game with 4.7 rebounds per contest. Britney McCloud and Sarah McAppion are also close to double digits with 9.1 points per contest.
• Chanda Rigby is in her first season as the women's basketball head coach at Troy. She comes to Troy following back-to-back state championships and two trips to the Final Four at Pensacola State.

Series with the Trojans

• Middle Tennessee and Troy meet for the 18th time on Thursday. The Blue Raiders hold a 16-1 lead in the series that began on Dec. 11, 1992. MT is 7-0 all-time versus the Trojans in Troy.
• Since Rick Insell's arrival in 2005-06, the Blue Raiders have won by an average margin of 25 points per game. However, the Trojans won their first victory in the series with a 74-70 overtime upset of MT at the Murphy Center., snapping the Raiders 12-game win streak at the time. Joanna Harden scored 27 points and Ashley Beverley-Kelly reached a double-double with 17 points and 13 rebounds.
• The largest margin of victory for Middle Tennessee over Troy was 51 points when the Raiders downed the Trojans 103-52 on Jan. 19, 2011.

In Sun Belt Play

• Coach Rick Insell is a remarkable 121-15 against Sun Belt competition in the regular season. His win total ranks fourth in the SBC and his winning percentage (.890) 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 31 out of its' last 34 regular season SBC games.

Looking at RPI

• Middle Tennessee's RPI rates as the best among Sun Belt competition. The Blue Raiders boast a No. 52 ranking as of Monday, Feb. 25.
• There are only two other league programs in the Top 100 of RPI: UALR (68) and Western

Kentucky (89).

Statistically Streaking

• The Raiders have averaged a margin of +14 points during the last 16 games.
• MT has shot 43 percent from the field, while averaging 68.3 points per contest.
• Rowe, Jones and Elie are all boasting above their regular season averages during the past 16 games. Rowe is pacing MT with 20.6 points, followed by Jones with 17.6 and Elie with 14.3 per game.

Sun Belt Tournament Outlook

• Middle Tennessee clinched the regular season title with a WKU loss to South Alabama on Wednesday. The Blue Raiders are the No. 1 seed in the SBC Tournament and will play at Noon on Friday, March 8.

Regular Season Success

• Middle Tennessee joins the likes of Green Bay, Gonzaga, Marist and Stanford to have currently won five or more consecutive regular season titles.

Experience Pays Off

• Middle Tennessee's Icelyn Elie, Kortni Jones and Ebony Rowe have all reached double-figures in 11 out of the last 16 games.
• Rowe has shot 59 percent during that 15 game stretch. Meanwhile, Kortni Jones has reached 20 or more points in six out of the last nine games. On the boards, Icelyn Elie has registered five or more rebounds in 16 consecutive contests.
• The tandem has put together 4,089 points in 9,745 minutes of action in a combined 322 games played.

Breaking 20

• Saturday's win gave Middle Tennessee its 21st season of collecting 20 or more wins in program history. MT has reached the 20-win plateau in nine consecutive seasons, eight of which were under the direction of Rick Insell.

Rankings in the Sun Belt

• Middle Tennessee leads the Sun Belt with a scoring margin of +10.9 and 15.3 offensive rebounds per game. MT is second in three other categories: assists per game (13.3), turnover margin (+3.63), and assist/turnover ratio (0.81). Junior Ebony Rowe leads the SBC with 5.3 offensive rebounds per game and a 54.6 field goal percentage. Rowe is third in points (20.2), second in rebounds (10.7) and minutes played (39.2). Guard Kortni Jones leads the SBC with 4.5 assists and is second with 2.5 triples made per game. Shanice Cason is third with 2.46 steals per game.

National Statistical Rankings

• The Raiders are in the NCAA top 75 in three categories as released on Feb. 25. MT is 39th in scoring margin (+10.9), 43rd in turnover margin (+3.63), 67th in scoring offense (67.7 ppg) and 74th

in field goal percentage (41.5).

• MT has four players in the top 100. Ebony Rowe ranks 16th with 20.2 points per game, 22nd with 10.7 rebounds a contest and tied for 16th with 15 double-doubles. Rowe is 18th in field goal percentage (54.6), while Icelyn Elie is listed 77th (46.7). Kortni Jones ranks 46th with 2.48 triples per game and is 73rd with 4.5 assists.

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