

# Blue Raiders drain 17 triples to sink Trojans

## Kortni Jones inks 29 points in victory

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**TROY, Ala.** - Middle

Tennessee knocked down a season-best 17 triples to defeat Troy 85-63 at Trojan Arena on Thursday evening.

The 3-point shot was critical for the Blue Raiders (21-7, 16-3 SBC), as the team knocked down 11 in the first half. MT opened up to a 16 point lead in the first half and expanded that to a 34 point edge in the first four minutes of the second half. The Raiders added six more treys in the second half to finish with the fourth best mark in program history. Troy (6-22, 3-16 SBC) was held to 33 percent shooting, going 20-of-60 from the field.



On Wednesday evening, MT clinched the No. 1 seed in the Sun Belt Tournament and the regular season title as WKU dropped a home contest to South Alabama. The Blue Raiders won their fifth consecutive regular season title, joining the ranks of Green Bay, Gonzaga, Marist and Stanford to have currently won five or more titles.

It was another spectacular night for senior Kortni Jones. The guard matched her career-high set last week against ULM with eight triples. The Oak Ridge product scored 29 points and dished out six assists in 38 minutes.

Icelyn Elie added 21 points with seven rebounds. The forward was 7-of-10 from the field with a season-high five assists, while adding two blocks and a steal in 38 minutes.

Junior Ebony Rowe matched a season high with 17 rebounds, while scoring 10 points. She inked her 16th double-double this season and the 48th of her career.

Also reaching double figures was Laken Leonard, who connected on three triples and a basket for 11 points, while grabbing four rebounds in 19 minutes. Freshman Caroline Warden drained two triples and picked up a pair of assists.

Overall, the Blue Raiders shot 43 percent (30-of-70) from the field, including 17-of-42 for 41 percent from 3-point land. The 17 makes the fourth best performance by a team in the NCAA this season. Troy was out-rebounded 45-to-38. Assists came easy for the Raiders, who dished out a season-best 23.

To open the game, MT went on a 17-4 run, going 5-of-7 from the 3-point line. Middle Tennessee eventually stretched its lead to 16 in the first half as the Raiders knocked down seven triples in the first nine minutes.

MT used an 18-7 run to extend its lead to 46-21 at the half. Jones scored 20 points, including 6-of-11 from the field. Rowe had 11 rebounds which included seven defensive boards.

In the second half, the Raiders opened where they left off stretching the lead to 34 with 16:43 left to play. Troy narrowed the gap below 20 before MT added a few baskets at the end to win their third consecutive game.

The Blue Raiders close out the regular season at rival Western Kentucky in an 11 a.m. contest on Saturday, March 2 that will be televised on the Sun Belt Network.

## **NOTES**

The 11 triples were the most for the Raiders in a first half this season ... Kortni Jones matched her career high set against ULM with eight triples ... The 17 triples was tied for fourth most in program history and in the NCAA this season ... Ebony Rowe notched her 48th double-double with 10 points and matched a season high with 17 rebounds ... The Blue Raiders are now 17-1 all-time against Troy ... Coach Rick Insell is 195-61 all-time in his eight seasons at Middle Tennessee ... The 17 triples were the most for MT since hitting 17 against FIU on Feb. 24, 2010.

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