

MT trio tallies double figures to down Lady Toppers

Raiders pick up fifth straight win in Bowling Green

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BOWLING GREEN, Ky. -

Double figure efforts from Icelyn Elie, Kortni Jones and Ebony Rowe propelled Middle Tennessee to a 71-54 victory over rival WKU at E.A. Diddle Arena on Saturday.

A slow start did not hamper the Blue Raiders (22-7, 17-3 Sun Belt), who shot under 30 percent in the first half. MT knocked down 15-of-25 for 60 percent in the second half to pick up its fifth straight win over WKU (20-9, 13-7) in Bowling Green.

Rowe, an All-America candidate (RaidersRowe.com

), registered her 17th double-double this season the 49th of her career with 25 points and 14 rebounds. The junior was 9-of-17 from the field with two blocks, an assist and a steal.

Senior guard Kortni Jones started the contest 1-of-12, but her six field goals in the final 10 minutes launched the Raiders to a win. Jones finished with 18 points, four steals, four rebounds and two assists. Despite being limited due to foul trouble, Icelyn Elie connected on 5-of-10 for 10 points, while grabbing seven rebounds.

Middle Tennessee finished the game shooting 42 percent (24-of-57) from the field, holding WKU to 40 percent (21-of-53). On the boards, the Raiders out-manned WKU, 41-30. Inside the paint, the Raiders outscored the Lady Tops, 34-to-22.

The regular season conference champion Blue Raiders open Sun Belt Conference Tournament action next Saturday, March 9 against the winner of the No. 8/No. 9 game played on Friday. The game will be televised on the Sun Belt Network.

The first half started slow with both squads tied at four through the first five minutes of play. WKU stretched their lead to 12-8. MT bounced back after Leonard hit a trey to tie and then Jones



connected on a fadeaway jumper giving the Raiders a 14-12 edge. The Blue Raiders held a five point lead twice and took a 27-23 lead into the locker room.

MT shot just 28 percent, going nine of 32 from the field in the first half. WKU was slightly better at 40 percent (10-25). Turnovers were deadly for WKU as MT forced 12 mistakes, while committing just seven. Elie had 10 points with six rebounds to lead the Raiders at the break.

In the second half, WKU trimmed the Blue Raider advantage to one. MT stretched the lead to six points. With the game still potentially up for grabs, Jones added a layup followed by jumpers from Stewart and Rowe to put the Raiders up by 11. WKU cut the advantage down to nine from a Jalynn McClain basket, but Kortni Jones tallied the next two baskets to put Middle Tennessee back in a comfortable lead.

Chastity Gooch and Alexis Govan each collected double-doubles for WKU. Gooch finished with 15 points and 10 rebounds, while Govan managed 14 points and 10 rebounds.

The Blue Raiders have won four consecutive games going into the SBC Tournament. MT takes on the winner of the No. 8/No. 9 seed on Saturday, March 9 with a tipoff scheduled for Noon. Official brackets for the SBC Tournament will be announced by the league office this weekend.

NOTES

All-America candidate Ebony Rowe reached her 49th double-double of her career and the 17th of the season with 25 points and 14 rebounds ... Kortni Jones has reached double figures in 13 consecutive games ... Icelyn Elie has grabbed five or more rebounds in 18 consecutive contests ... MT now leads WKU 32-23 in the all-time series and the Raiders are 17-4 under Rick Insell ... MT has won 12 consecutive games against the Lady Tops.

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