

McClinic Scores Season High 16 in Lady Raider Win over Arkansas State

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - A nip and tuck game early turned into a solid win for the Middle Tennessee Lady Raiders (13-10, 5-5 Sun Belt) as they downed Arkansas State (9-14, 3-7 Sun Belt) 79-64 in the Murphy Center Thursday. Nursing a five point lead with 9:04 left to play, Middle Tennessee got some key plays from freshman Tiffany Fisher to give the Lady Raiders some breathing room. Fisher opened the lead to eight with a trey, then promptly stole the ball and completed the play with a lay-up to put MT up by 10. It was the first double-digit lead of the night for Middle Tennessee and the Lady Raiders pulled away for the win. It was a night for players to step up as guard Keisha McClinic was feeling it from the three-point line (3-6) and ended the game with a season-high 16 points. Middle Tennessee also saw strong



play from sophomore Jennifer Justice who had 15 points and pulled down seven rebounds. She also snagged two steals and had three blocked shots. Patrice Holmes continued her streak as she scored in double figures with 15 points for the seventh time in a row. Jamie Thomatis was the fourth Lady Raider in double figures with 11 points. Middle Tennessee will host Arkansas-Little Rock on Saturday in the Murphy Center. Tip-off is scheduled for 7 p.m. **McCLINIC GETS HOT:** Keisha McClinic found her stroke against the Lady Indians on Thursday night. The sophomore from Stockbridge, GA, led the team with 16 points. McClinic was 5-of-9 from the field including 3-of-6 from behind the arc. McClinic's performance marks the second time in her career that she has led the team in scoring. It also is the first time that she has eclipsed double figures since netting 11 against Houston on Dec. 20. **UNDER 70 AGAIN:** Tonight's game marks the 71st time under Stephany

Smith that the Lady Raiders have held the opposition under 70 points. The Lady Raiders hold a 60-11 record in those contests. This season, the Lady Raiders are 13-3 in those games. **JUSTICE ON THE BOARDS:** Jennifer Justice led Middle Tennessee in rebounding against Arkansas State on Thursday by grabbing seven. Justice, who is averaging 4.0 rebounds per game, has now paced her squad on the boards three times this year. **McCLURE STEALING THE SHOW:** Jessica McClure swiped four steals against the Lady Indians to equal her season-high. McClure's thievery moved her up to third on the career steals list with 208 all-time. She is now only 13 behind Sherry Tucker, who stands second on the list with 221. **THIS AND THAT:** Jamie Thomatis netted double figures for the 21st time in 22 games this season with 11 tonight - Keisha McClinic's three treys equals a season high - Thomatis' six assists equals a season high - the Blue Raiders have now won four of their last five games - the Blue Raiders have won three straight over ASU - Patrice Holmes has tallied double figures in seven straight games - four Lady Raiders reached double figures in scoring tonight. **MT Head Coach Stephany Smith:** "I thought for the majority of the game that we did a heck of a job on the defensive end of the floor. We did a great job coming out of the gates into a man-to-man defense. When we went to the zone midway through the first half, I thought we did a great job with that as well. "We went back to the man for the majority of the time in the second half and I just thought it was a really, really good defensive effort. We have been playing good defense in my opinion all year long once we got going, at least for the last month anyway. Where we fall short with our defense is we don't finish it." "We don't box out and get the rebound. We were giving up offensive rebounds and second and third chance opportunities that make our defense look bad. Overall, our defense was really good tonight, and we did a lot better job of boxing out." **MT Forward Jennifer Justice:** "The first half, we started out good and we were boxing out. In the second half, we came out kind of sluggish. We just needed to control the tempo in the second half. We did that and ended up winning." "We are just focused on winning and trying to start a winning streak going into the tournament. Hopefully, we will be able to do that." **MT Guard Keisha McClinic:** "I think we had a great game. We came out and had fun, and that was one of the biggest things we wanted to come out and do. We wanted to play together as a team and tonight we were able to do that."

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