

Lady Rockets threaten late at Moore Co., but can't finish rally

By **Chris Siers**
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LYNCHBURG — At one point early in the first half, the Forrest Lady Rockets trailed at Moore County by double figures.

Despite being on the road and facing a Moore County Raiderette team blessed with a lot of size and length, Forrest fought back and pulled within three points inside of a minute to go, but the earlier hole the Lady Rockets found themselves in proved too much to dig out as Forrest fell, 42-38, on Tuesday night in Lynchburg.

"We're still a work in progress. I do think we've really improved since the start of the year. We can't dig holes and we dug a double-digit hole in the first half. We don't really have the firepower right now to overcome that. We did stay the course and continued to fight. I was very proud of the effort," Lady Rocket coach Hal Murrell said.

Moore County utilized its size and was able to control the bulk of the game by attacking the rim and working its way to the free throw line.

In total, the Raiderettes shot 11-of-19 free throw attempts, compared to a 4-of-6 night by the Lady Rockets.

Despite trailing by six at the half, Forrest came out firing away from the perimeter and

scored the first nine points of the second half from beyond the arc, including a pair of threes by senior Macyn Kirby within the first three minutes of the half.

After Kirby drilled a trey with 5:15 left in the third, Forrest had whittled the Raiderette lead to four points.

Although Forrest came out hot, the Lady Rockets were held scoreless through the remainder of the quarter and Moore County was able to extend its lead back to nine points, despite trailing by near double figures again, Forrest battled back and with 31 seconds left, Kinslee Inlow drilled a transition three-pointer to pull Forrest within five.

After Moore County's Macy Fletcher missed the front end of a one-and-one with 29 ticks left in regulation, Inlow again came through and hit a put-back to bring the Lady Rockets within a single possession.

But with 15 seconds left, it was Moore County's Madison Dinger who hit both attempts on a one-and-one to help preserve the lead.

Kirby did add a free throw in the closing seconds, but that was as close as Forrest could get to snatching the lead in the closing seconds.

"There's still a lot of the little things we need to clean up with turnovers and giving them



Lady Rocket coach Hal Murrell huddles up with his team in the final minute during a time out on Tuesday night at Moore County.

second chance points off the offensive glass. It's really a tale of two halves. We need to play with the energy we did the last four minutes in the first three quarters and I think it would have been a different game," Murrell said.

With the Lady Rockets battling injuries to key post players, the composition of the girls on the floor has been a work in progress through the first month of the season.

Moore County was able to lean on its size mismatch and control the game from inside the paint and off the glass.

"That was a the dilemma the whole game. That was a tale of where our shots came from and where theirs came from," Murrell said.

With that mismatch, Forrest had to play to its strengths, which right now comes from

the perimeter.

In total, Forrest out-shot Moore County 6-3 from beyond the arc on Tuesday night, with Kirby and Megan Mealer both connecting on a pair of treys.

"We're having to play from the perimeter quite a bit. Hopefully as we progress through the next couple of weeks, we can get our guards to the rim a little bit more through penetration and kicks or getting to the rim and finish and foul and getting to the line," Murrell added.

Kirby and Mealer both cracked into double figures and scored 12 points each, while no Raiderette hit the double-figure mark in the scoring column.

Forrest returns to its home court on Friday night, hosting backyard rival Eagleville at 6 p.m.

Forrest	14	14	9	42
Moore Co.	7	8	14	38

Forrest: Macyn Kirby 12, Megan Mealer 12, Kinslee Inlow 9, Josie Brown 3, Carl



Megan Mealer drives the baseline and battles her way to the rim.

Warner 2, Moore Co.: Madison Dinger 9, Ava Butts 8, Ellie Graham 7, Macy Fletcher 6, Paisley Logan 5, Katy Fletcher 3, Audrey Harder 2, 3-Point goals: Moore Co. (6): Kirby 2, Mealer 2, Inlow, Brown; Moore Co. (3): Logan, K. Fletcher, Dinger. Halftime score: Moore Co. 28, Forrest 22.

CORNERSVILLE WRESTLING RECEIVES DONATION



The Cornersville wrestling team received a donation from First National Bank, with proceeds benefitting the new wrestling mat for the team. Presenting the check to Jaxie Bush is Larry Nance.

NBA MVP award now named Michael Jordan Trophy

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Basketball Writer

Michael Jordan was moments away from hoisting his third of what would become five NBA Most Valuable Player awards, and then-Commissioner David Stern greeted him at the midcourt ceremony with words that were both simple and profound.

"You are simply the standard," Stern said that night in 1992, "by which basketball excellence is measured."

That's never been more true.

The NBA MVP award has been renamed The Michael Jordan Trophy, the league announced Tuesday. Jordan is a five-time MVP so he has five trophies named for Maurice Podoloff — the league's first commissioner. But after six decades of the award bearing Podoloff's name, the NBA decided the time was right to rebrand.

The Jordan trophy will stand 23.6 inches tall and weigh 23.6 pounds -- nods to his jersey number and six NBA titles with the Chicago Bulls -- but is not

a depiction of him. The chairman of the Charlotte Hornets approved the design, one that symbolizes someone reaching for excellence, but did not want the statue to be of himself. He also declined a request for comment through the NBA.

"Anybody should be able to see this and see themselves in it," said Mark Smith, a longtime designer at Jordan Brand and the person who oversaw the trophy's design. "They should feel the excellence of Michael Jordan and his pursuit. It's got his name on it, but it isn't him. It's everybody. It could be a shipbuilder or it could be a teacher or a lawyer or a writer who looks at it and says, 'That's what I'm trying to do.'"

The league has rebranded almost all its trophies in the last two seasons, even adding some new ones. As part of Tuesday's announcement, the league revealed that The Jerry West Award is being introduced and will be given to the NBA Clutch Player of the Year — which, like almost all other league awards, will be voted on by a media panel. NBA coaches will nominate players for the clutch award.

Expansive coaching tree part of Leach's legacy

By **RALPH D. RUSSO**
AP College Football Writer

When Mike Leach first moved to Mississippi State from Washington State, he stayed in the Left Field Lofts at the Bulldogs' baseball stadium.

The two-bedroom, two-bathroom apartments have balconies that look out at the diamond at Dudy Noble Field, and are a 3-minute walk from Mississippi State's football facility and practice field.

Leach asked about living in one of the lofts. Even if that had been possible, his wife, Sharon, quickly put the kibosh on that idea.

Just another example of Leach being Leach, the quirky, mad scientist football coach with a passion for pirates — his autobiography is titled "Swing Your Sword" — and strong opinions on candy and coffee.

John Cohen, the athletic director who hired Leach at Mississippi State, saw it differently.

"I think that everything to him was about functionality," Cohen, now the AD at Auburn, told The Associated Press on Tuesday. "I think that's why he was able to beat people that might have had more talent. Because he just had such a practical, highly functional way of looking at things."

Leach died Monday night of complications from a heart condition at the age of 61. He coached college football for more than three decades, 21 of those as a head coach at Mississippi State, Washington State and Texas Tech.

Running the prolific Air Raid offense he learned from Hal Mumme as an assistant early in his career, Leach's teams went 158-107 and often set records along the way.

While Leach will be remembered most for helping to revolutionize offensive football and his propensity to riff on myriad topics, those who worked with him saw an underappreciated leader and program builder who spawned an expansive coaching tree.

Mumme told The AP a conversation with Leach could drift like "a balloon in the wind."

"But he had this innate ability just to focus like a laser on certain things and make his players do the same thing," Mumme said. "And that's

where I think he was great. And that's why he was able to turn around three programs."

The list of current head coaches who worked and/or played for Leach includes some of the most successful in the country: Southern California's Lincoln Riley; TCU's Sonny Dykes; Tennessee's Josh Heupel; Baylor's Dave Aranda; Houston's Dana Holgorsen; West Virginia's Neal Brown; Louisiana Tech's Sonny Cumbie; and Kliff Kingsbury of the Arizona Cardinals.

On Tuesday, just hours after Mississippi State announced Leach had died, former Texas Tech receiver and Washington State offensive coordinator Eric Morris was named head coach at North Texas.

"This is incredible for this to happen on a day like today. Another Mike Leach guy!!!" Holgorsen tweeted about Morris.

Cohen, a former college baseball coach, said Leach's practices were some of the most efficient he had ever witnessed in any sport.

"There's just no wasted movement," Cohen said.

Ruffin McNeill was a defensive assistant during Leach's entire time as head coach at Texas Tech (2000-09).

"He believed in a set of principles or philosophy, and he was steadfast," McNeill said.

Under Leach, the Red Raiders lost their first two of 10 straight bowl games — an unprecedented streak of postseason appearances for the program.

So Leach directed his staff to identify the programs that were having success in bowl games and find out how they prepared, McNeill said. The Red Raiders ended up winning six of the last eight bowl games during that stretch.

Leach's time at Texas Tech ended tumultuously. He was accused of mistreating a player with a concussion and fired after butting heads with the administration over the accusation. When Leach was ousted, some players said he could be abrasive, stubborn and even belittling.

No one worked with Leach longer and more closely than Dave Emerick, who was chief of staff at all three head coaching stops before taking a similar job for Riley at USC earlier this year.