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UTSA women prevail in 'must-win' game

By **Pat Turner** - Special to the Express-News

After last Saturday's loss to Lamar, UTSA coach Rae Rippetoe-Blair labeled Wednesday's Southland Conference matchup with Sam Houston State as a must-win.

Looking at the way her Roadrunners responded, she might consider putting the rest of the conference games in that category.

UTSA (11-9, 5-2 Southland) dominated Sam Houston (5-14, 2-5) in all areas in rolling to a 74-55 victory at the Convocation Center.

Offensively, freshman Judy Jones, who scored in double figures for the eighth straight time, poured in a season-high 26 points. Whitney York added 16, while Whitney Wright added 10.

In addition, UTSA forced 14 turnovers and had a 44-33 advantage on the boards, with Ashleigh Franklin coming up with 10 rebounds. Not to be overlooked, the Roadrunners fared better at the free-throw line, hitting 17 of 25, and they took care of the ball, committing only nine turnovers.

Thanks to the effort, UTSA moved closer to SLC West Division leader Lamar (17-4, 7-1), which dropped a 92-77 decision to Central Arkansas.

"I was very nervous coming into this game," Rippetoe-Blair said. "It was a must-win for us. To even give ourselves a chance to win the conference championship during the regular season, we have to win our home games.

"... Judy gave us a spark. Our effort and energy were there from the start. We finally turned it on. Now, we have to keep it going."

Jones and York got UTSA started in the first half by frequently driving inside and combining for all but six of the Roadrunners' points as they built a 35-27 lead.

"It seems like when someone gets going, we all become more confident," Jones said. "I was just trying to play my game and not rush anything. I was letting the game come to me. Everyone came ready to play."

The Roadrunners continued to put the heat on Sam Houston in the second half, expanding their advantage to 65-38 with 7:35 remaining.

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