

TOP 25 / SEC

Kentucky 90, No. 24 Tennessee 72

# Meeks inherits Kentucky-record 54 points

KNOXVILLE, TENN.—Jodie Meeks was just trying to get a victory. He didn't fathom having a chance at earning a spot among Kentucky's greatest players.

Meeks scored a school-record 54 points to help Kentucky cruise to a 90-72 win over No. 24 Tennessee on Tuesday night.

"It means a lot to be in the same sentence as Dan Issel. It's mind-boggling," he said. "I was just out there playing to win."

Meeks, who broke Issel's 39-year-old record of 53 points set at Mississippi, was mobbed by his Kentucky teammates in the middle of the Thompson-Boling Arena court, where the Wildcats (13-4, 2-0 SEC) handed the Volunteers their third loss in January.

The Southeastern Conference's leading scorer surpassed his previous high of 46 points, which he set Dec. 20 against Appalachian State, with 4:50 left as he hit an open 3, one of 10 3-pointers he would make for the night. He set the record with free throws with 1:31 left.

Meeks entered the game ranked fourth in the nation in scoring with an average 24.2 points per game.

"I have never seen anything like it," Kentucky coach Billy Gillispie said. "Jodie Meeks had 46 against Appalachian State, and they are a nice team, but not near a team of the quality of Tennessee and on the home court."

The 54 points was also the biggest individual SEC performance since Shaquille O'Neal scored 52 points for LSU against Arkansas State in 1990.



It was all Jodie Meeks, left, on Tuesday evening, as no other Kentucky player scored more than nine points against Tennessee.

"There have been so many great players—this is the greatest basketball tradition in the world at the collegiate level—and to be able to put your name up there with some of those greats is quite an accomplishment," Gillispie said.

Down by six at the half,

Tennessee (10-5, 1-1) cut Kentucky's lead to 43-41 on a fast-break basket by Wayne Chism a minute and a half into the second half.

But the Vols' spotty defense couldn't contain Meeks, who hit a layup and two 3-pointers to help the Wildcats on a 10-0 run that gave

them a 53-41 lead. Even contested shots sank perfectly through the nets.

"Defensively we tried to guard him as a team," Tennessee coach Bruce Pearl said. "We didn't have any one guy on him, but none of our guards could guard him."

Kentucky began stumbling into foul trouble with 9:34 left, and Tennessee—which to that point had shot 35 percent from the free-throw line—sank 11 straight bonus shots to cut the Wildcats' lead to 71-64 with 6:52 left.

But Meeks, who also went a perfect 14-for-14 from the free-throw line, scored nine straight points to put the game away. No other Kentucky player scored in double figures. Patrick Patterson grabbed 12 rebounds.

"This year it's his team, and he's playing like it is and he's going all out," Chism said.

Tyler Smith led Tennessee with 19 points, Chism had 18 points and Bobby Maze added 11 points.

With two 3-pointers and a fast break layup by Meeks, Kentucky used a 12-0 run to grab a 28-20 lead with 7:27 in the first half. Meeks had 26 points in the first half, including going 5-for-7 from behind the arc.

Tennessee couldn't capitalize on several easy opportunities under the basket in the first half, and the Wildcats pushed their lead up to 39-28 with 2:37 left before halftime.

J.P. Prince stole the ball from Kevin Galloway, drove it to the basket and kicked it out to Smith, who sank a 3 with 15 seconds to cut the Wildcats' lead to 41-37 before the break.

Tennessee shot 37.9 percent from the field compared to Kentucky's 56.6 percent and only hit six of 23 attempts from behind the arc.

—The Associated Press

### STANDINGS

East	Conference			All Games		
	W	L	PCT	W	L	PCT
Kentucky	2	0	1.000	13	4	.765
Florida	1	0	1.000	14	2	.875
South Carolina	1	0	1.000	12	2	.857
Tennessee	1	1	.500	10	5	.667
Vanderbilt	0	1	.000	11	4	.733
Georgia	0	1	.000	9	7	.563

West	Conference			All Games		
	W	L	PCT	W	L	PCT
Alabama	1	0	1.000	11	4	.733
Mississippi St.	1	0	1.000	11	5	.688
Arkansas	0	1	.000	12	2	.857
LSU	0	1	.000	12	1	.900
Auburn	0	1	.000	10	5	.667
Mississippi	0	1	.000	9	6	.600

Tuesday's Games  
Tennessee 90, Kentucky 72

Today's Games  
Florida at Auburn, 8 p.m.  
Arkansas at Mississippi, 8 p.m.  
Georgia at Vanderbilt, 8 p.m.  
South Carolina at LSU, 8 p.m.  
Alabama at Mississippi State, 8 p.m.

Kentucky	41	49	—	90			
Tennessee	37	35	—	72			
<b>KENTUCKY</b>	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	PF	PTS
Stevens	28	3-6	0-0	1-4	2	5	6
Harris	24	3-3	1-2	5-5	1	4	7
Patterson	39	3-8	3-4	3-12	0	4	9
Porter	33	2-4	0-0	0-0	6	1	5
Meeks	39	15-22	14-14	0-8	4	2	54
Miler	21	3-6	0-0	3-3	1	3	7
Galloway	10	1-3	0-0	1-4	0	1	2
Stewart	6	0-1	0-0	1-1	0	0	0
Totals	200	30-53	18-20	11-39	16	20	90

Percentages: FG, 56.6; FT, 90.0. 3-Point Goals: 12-19 (.632) (Meeks 10-15, Miller 1-2, Porter 1-2). Team Rebounds: 2. Blocked Shots: 2 (Miller 2). Turnovers: 15 (Miller 5, Porter 3, Galloway 2, Harris 2, Patterson, Meeks, Stevens, Stewart, 4 (Chism, 2 (Meeks, Stevens)). Technical Fouls: None.

TENNESSEE	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	PF	PTS
Smith	35	5-14	7-7	1-2	0	2	19
Chism	30	7-23	4-6	2-9	1	1	18
Maze	27	5-12	0-0	1-2	2	3	11
Prince	25	2-5	0-1	4-7	2	2	4
Hepson	24	1-6	1-2	1-2	2	5	3
Woodridge	5	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Tatum	26	2-8	1-4	0-1	2	1	6
Sabb	13	0-2	0-0	0-2	0	2	0
Williams	15	3-5	2-6	3-6	0	4	9
Totals	200	25-66	16-26	19-32	9	17	72

Percentages: FG, 37.9; FT, 61.5. 3-Point Goals: 6-23 (.261) (Smith 2-5, Williams 1-1, Hepson 0-3, Tatum 1-4, Maze 1-6, Woodridge 0-1, Chism 0-0). Team Rebounds: 1. Blocked Shots: 1 (Williams). Turnovers: 8 (Chism 3, Maze 1, Tatum, Williams). Steals: 8 (Chism 1, Prince 2, Maze, Tatum, Sabb). Technical Fouls: None.

A: 20,474. Officials: Tony Greene, John Cahill, Doug Show.