

# Musketeers use size to down Blue Raiders

## Pickel nets team-high 22 points

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**CINCINNATI** - A decisive size advantage enabled No. 9/10 Xavier to put four players in double figures and hold a 19-rebound edge against Middle Tennessee in an 80-63 women's basketball victory Thursday night at the Cintas Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. The Musketeers, featuring 6-6 Ta'Shia Phillips and 6-5 Amber Phillips, led wire-to-wire in the teams' first meeting since the 2004-05 campaign.

The hosts jumped out to an early 6-0 lead behind back-to-back buckets from Phillips, but the Blue Raiders pulled within five, 8-3, as Jackie Pickel drove for a layup and Alysha Clark added a free throw at 16:12.

Three-pointers early kept Middle Tennessee within reach, as Pickel hit a 30-footer and Chelsia Lymon chipped in on the next possession to cut the deficit to four, 13-9, with 13:52 to play. Phillips continued to tack on points in the paint, but a turnaround baseline jumper from Brandi Brown kept the margin at just four at the under-12 minute timeout.

Xavier (6-0) padded its lead over the next four minutes, using a 9-0 run, including four more points by Phillips, to take a 24-11 edge. Freshman Kortni Jones halted the streak at 7:37 when she drove through the paint for her first collegiate points.

The Musketeers then countered with a run of triples of their own, as Tyeasha Moss hit a pair and



Special Jennings knocked down a spinning one from the corner as the shot clock expired with 3:31 to go in the half to put the nationally-ranked home team ahead 33-18.

The Blue Raiders, however, would not quit as Pickel and Lymon each contributed one more 3-pointer before the half, while holding Xavier to just four free throws to trail at the intermission, 37-25.

Pickel then single-handedly attempted to keep Middle Tennessee (3-3) in the game, draining three consecutive 3-pointers with Lymon adding another, during a three-minute stretch, to again close the gap at a dozen, 53-41. Pickel then grabbed a pair of backcourt steals, racing to the other end for a layup but the Musketeers methodically added baskets themselves to keep the distance in double figures.

However, the Blue Raider sharpshooter missed her final six shots from behind the arc and they could not trim the margin to any less than 14 the remainder of the game. Brown connected on a pair of long-range bombs with over seven minutes remaining and Anne Marie Lanning also added two 3-pointers after the final media timeout.

Phillips' dominating performance resulted in 20 points and 20 rebounds, while Dee Dee Jernigan poured in 13 points. Moss and Jennings each contributed a dozen with Jennings nearly posting a double-double after dishing nine assists.

Pickel led Middle Tennessee with 22 points, one shy of her career high, including five 3-pointers. Brown and Lymon drained three triples apiece, as the Blue Raiders finished with 13 treys. Brown and Clark each contributed 11 points.

Middle Tennessee will return to action as it continues its three-game road swing at 6 p.m. Central Wednesday when it faces defending national runner-up Louisville in Louisville, Ky.

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