Lady Raiders Drop 65-63 Decision

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - A three-pointer at the buzzer by Middle Tennessee's Jamie Thomatis would not go down, and the homestanding Lady Raiders dropped a 65-63 decision to Cincinnati in women's basketball action Saturday afternoon at the Murphy Center. The visiting Bearcats (3-0) trailed by one in the final 30 seconds of the game until Valerie King nailed a three-pointer from the corner with 19 seconds remaining to give UC a two-point advantage. The Lady Raiders came down and Jessica McClure missed a running layup that would have tied the contest. Cincinnati's K.B. Sharp rebounded the missed shot and was fouled immediately with five seconds left. Sharp gave the Lady Raiders (1-2) a chance by missing the one-plus-one. McClure pushed the ball up the floor and found Thomatis in the corner for a final shot at the buzzer, but the ball rolled up the rim, hit the backboard and bounced out, giving the Bearcats the two-point win. Thomatis kept her squad in the game in the final 10 minutes, scoring eight of the Lady Raiders final 10 baskets. The 5-11 senior had just three points in the game until hitting a jumper with 10:11 to play, tying the contest at 48. Neither team gained more than a four-point advantage the rest of the way, and Thomatis gave MT a one-point lead with a three-pointer at the 2:38 mark. The Bearcats held an eight-point lead early in the second half, but excellent shooting by the Lady Raiders and a more concerted defensive effort allowed the home team to get back in the game. The Lady Raiders made 16-of-28 shots after halftime and forced UC into eight second-half turnovers. Cincinnati led 32-27 at the half despite shooting just 36 percent from the floor in the opening 20 minutes. But the visitors hit the boards, grabbing 23 rebounds in the first half to Middle Tennessee's 14, and outrebounded the Lady Raiders, 39-28, in the contest. Thomatis scored 18 points in the contest, her 16th straight game in double-figures dating to last season. Senior Joanne Aluka had 10 points and six rebounds, while Keisha McClinic grabbed a team-high seven boards. Cincinnati was led by freshman forward Debbie Merrill, who had a game-high 19 points before fouling out with 1:29 left in the contest. Merrill and UC's Tammy

Douglass grabbed a game-high nine rebounds for the winners. Douglass added 15 points and King 13 for the undefeated Bearcats. The Lady Raiders hit the road for a 7 p.m. contest at Austin Peay Tuesday before returning home next Saturday to host Ole Miss in a 2 p.m. tip-off at the Murphy Center.

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