Lady Raiders Defeat UALR 81-63 on Senior Night

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Murfreesboro, Tenn. - With a 81-63 victory over Arkansas-Little Rock, the Middle Tennessee Lady Raider's made it a sweep over the Lady Trojans on senior night Saturday in Murphy Center. Trailing 49-18 to start the second half, UALR refused to go quietly into the night, as the Lady Trojans scored 45 points to make the game respectable. Strong play by the Lady Raider rookies, giving a nod to the seniors, made sure it was a victory for Middle Tennessee, and extended Arkansas-Little Rock's Sun Belt Conference losing streak to 40 games in a row. Senior Jamie Thomatis led the way for Middle Tennessee with 18 points; she also had nine rebounds and three steals. Backing her up was the young blood for the team, as sophomore Jennifer Justice 11 points and freshman bumped her streak up to eight games in row in double figures with 11 points. Middle Tennessee closes out its regular season at home when the Lady Raiders host South Alabama on Thursday February 14 in Murphy Center. **SENIOR NIGHT:** The Lady Raiders saw three seniors play their final game at the Murphy Center on Saturday night. Joanne Aluka from Augusta, GA, Jessica McClure from Paris, TN, and Jamie Thomatis from Destrahan, LA, were honored for their contributions to the program prior to tipoff of the game. **FISHER SETS PERSONAL HIGH:** Freshman Tiffany Fisher set a personal best on the boards tonight. The Jackson, TN, native pulled down nine rebounds against UALR, surpassing her previous best of seven which she set against Memphis on Jan. 2. Fisher and Jamie Thomatis, who also had nine rebounds, led the team in that category. **HOLMES DISHES IT OUT:** Freshman Patrice Holmes set a career high with seven assists against UALR. Holmes' previous high in assists was three, which she had done on five occasions. Holmes is now averaging 2.0 assists per game. **PLAYING WELL IN THE STRETCH:** The Lady Raiders are gearing up for the final stretch run in the right way. The team has won five of its last six game. The team's lone loss in this stretch

came on Feb. 2 at Florida International. **ONE MORE LEFT:** Tonight's contest means that only one home game remains for the Lady Raiders this season. Middle Tennessee is slated to play South Alabama in the Murphy Center on Feb. 14 at 7 PM. **ALUKA IN THE STARTING FIVE:** Senior Joanne Aluka found herself in the starting lineup for the first time since Jan. 10 against New Mexico. The senior, who has been battling injuries all season, has now started in eight games this year. **THIS AND THAT:** Jamie Thomatis reached double figures for the 22nd time in 23 games this season and for the 93rd time in her career - The Lady Raiders are now 4-0 against UALR since joining the Sun Belt - the Lady Raiders held the opposition under 70 points for the 17th time this season, giving the team a 14-3 record in those contests - all but two Lady Raiders scored in the game against UAL. **MT Forward Jamie Thomatis: On senior night:** "I was staying strong. Coach Smith kind of got emotional in the locker room, and I stayed strong. When I got out on the floor I said I wasn't going to cry, but as soon (Eboni Kirby) started singing I was through staying strong. From then on, it was pretty emotional." **MT Guard Jessica McClure: On senior night:** "It was a very emotional night with it being Senior Night. With all the things I have been through these past four year, it's been great to be here. I love it. We still have a long way to go before the season is over and we hope to put on a better show next Thursday." **MT Forward Joanne Aluka:** "It took a little while for me to recover from the injury that I have had all season. I felt good to come out and play with my teammates, especially my other two seniors out there." "It's been a long season with my injury. With this being one of our last home games, I just tried to come out and give it all I could just one last time with Jamie [Thomatis] and Jessica [McClure], and just come out, have a good time and play hard." **MT Head Coach Stephany Smith:** "I thought we played exceptional in the first half. Everybody that came in did a good job, contributed, and was positive. I have been really proud of our defense lately. I think our defense has been pretty effective all season long. We pushed the ball in transition and got easy looks." **On senior night:** "We have had a lot of senior nights come and go, and it is always a little heart throbbing. Never had tears rolled down my cheeks, but I had a tough time with the pre-game because they have meant so much to this program and to me personally individually and as a group. As there are graduating and going out, you can see the tremendous talent that is coming in. They have everything to do with that. If they hadn't built the program to the level it is at, we wouldn't have level of talent coming in our freshman class that we have."

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