Thomatis Leads Lady Raiders in Final Home Game

February 14, 2002 · MT Media Relations

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Senior Jamie Thomatis scored a game-high 24 points, including two free throws with 5.6 seconds remaining to seal the victory, as the Middle Tennessee Lady Raiders defeated South Alabama, 71-66, Thursday night at the Murphy Center. Thomatis, making her last appearance in the Murphy Center, along with seniors Jessica McClure and Joanne Aluka, scored the first five points of the contest for Middle Tennessee (15-10, 7-5 SBC), setting the tone for her big night. She had 14 points after halftime to lead three double-figure scorers for the winners. The Lady Raiders held a one-point advantage at halftime but stretched the lead to as many as 13 points in the second half after Paula Penttila's three-ball from the corner with 6:51 remaining. But the Jaguars would not go away, going on a 12-2 run over the next four minutes to cut the deficit to three with 2:05 on the clock. Patrice Holmes and Thomatis both made buckets down the stretch before Thomatis sealed the victory with the two free throws in the final seconds. Holmes had 11 points in the contest and Jennifer Justice added 12 for the Lady Raiders, with Holmes, Thomatis and

Tiffany Fisher tying for the team lead with seven rebounds. Joi Gopher led the Jaguars (17-7, 7-5) with 18 points, including four three-pointers. Qiana Mitchell added 14, Taneshia Russell had 13 points and seven boards, and Lyletha Gamble had 10 points in a losing effort. The Lady Raiders travel to Denver Saturday for an 8 p.m. CT tip-off against the Pioneers. Middle Tennessee concludes the regular season on February 22 at Western Kentucky. **GAME NOTES**

LOVIN' FEBRUARY: Head Coach Stephany Smith has been tough in the month of February. Smith has put together an impressive 30-7 mark in the month of February. Smith was a perfect 10-0 in February in 1999-2000 and had a mark of 6-1 last season. Following tonight's win over USA, Smith is 3-1 in February this year.

PERFECT ON VALENTINE'S DAY: The Lady Raiders improved to a perfect 2-0 all-time under Stephany Smith on Valentine's Day with the win over USA tonight. Middle Tennessee also won on this lovely day in 1998 with an 80-78 win over Tennessee State on the road. As a program, Middle Tennessee now has a mark of 6-1 all-time on Valentine's Day.

GOOD SHOOTING NIGHT: The Lady Raiders enjoyed one of their best shooting nights of the year in the win over the Jaguars tonight. Middle Tennessee connected on 54.9 percent of its shots to record the second best shooting game of the season. The Lady Raiders shot a sizzling 60.9 percent from the field, including 5 of 7 shooting by Jamie Thomatis.

39 AND COUNTING: Senior Jamie Thomatis carried the scoring load again tonight with 24 points on 9 of 11 shooting to go along with seven rebounds. It marked the 39th game of Thomatis' career she has scored 20 or more points in a game.

THIS -N' THAT: Tonight's win was just the second all-time against the Jaguars for the Lady Raiders - Keisha McClinic handed out six assists tonight in the win over USA to mark the second most in a single-game in her career - Jennifer Justice's three blocks versus USA marked her second most in a game - Jamie Thomatis has scored in double figures now 94 times in 109 career games played - The Lady Raiders were a perfect 6-for-6 from the free throw line in the second half.

GAME QUOTES

MT Head Coach Stephany Smith

On senior Jamie Thomatis

"I thought that she played really well, probably as well as she has played all season. She has had some good moments, but I thought she had a pretty good 40 minutes tonight. It had a lot to do with how successful we were. "I thought we did a pretty good job with our offense in the first half. A lot of it had to do with our defense being so effective, initially. Then [USA] started knocking down some three-point shots, which obviously starts making our offense a little bit more stagnant because we are not coming in the flow. We are coming up in the inbound. That had a lot to do with it. We have been working a lot in practice about reversing the ball and coming up with easy looks, instead of throwing into the low post and it being sucked into a black hole and then it never comes out. I noticed our team improving everyday. I noticed our team improved another giant step in practice yesterday. Those things are still going to happen. We are going to improve until the end of our season."

MT Forward Jaime Thomatis:

"We have had to overcome a lot of struggles, adversity and obstacles throughout the season to get to this point. With all the one-possession losses that we have had in the past, we didn't lose our confidence. We just buckled down and pushed harder, partly due to Coach Smith pushing us harder."

USA Head Coach Rick Pietri:

"Stephany [Smith] does a great job. They have very good offensive players. They made some plays, but our defensive effort wasn't what is has been. Thomatis made some very difficult plays. When we

made it a one-possession game, we had to have one defensive stop. We didn't come up with the ball, and [Thomatis] made the play to really symbolically finish the game."

Printed on December 12, 2013
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/775