## **Sports**

TOP

## Lady Raiders Rally To Win Season Opener

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Lady Raiders Rally To Win Season Opener

POPLAR BLUFF - It is better to win ugly than to lose pretty.

Just ask the Three Rivers Lady Raiders, who overcame a six-point halftime deficit and inconsistent play to pull out a 64-57 win over the Williams Baptist Lady Eagles Tuesday night at the Bess Activity Center in the season opener for the black and gold.

"It was a growing experience in the post," Three Rivers coach Jeff Walk said. "I think our guards do a decent enough job and they're going to get better because were sophomoreheavy in the backcourt."

Not until Dennisha Rice canned a 3-pointer with 8:32 to go did the Lady Raiders (1-0) snap a 47-all tie and take the lead for good against Williams Baptist.

Rice's trey ignited a 12-3 run, making it a 59-50 game on her basket with 5:22 to go. After Williams responded with a 7-0 run to cut the lead down to two points, Candice Miller hit a field goal with 1:48 to go to end the run and make it a 61-57 game.

"That's what you expect those sophomores to do," said Walk. "I think that's an indicator of what's to come from – not only (Rice) but the rest of them."

Three Rivers led 23-16 in the first half, but the Lady Eagles seized momentum, going on a 17-4 run to end the opening session and take a 33-27 lead to the locker room.

"In the middle part of the first half, when we got the ball at the post and scored at will, and then we stopped doing it because of the inexperience of the freshmen post players," Walk said. "They're still just doing things that they did in high school and the emphasis was get the ball to the post."

In the second half, the Lady Raiders began to slowly chip away. Andrea Becker's rebound and putback of a missed free throw cut the deficit to 41-39, and Miller's runner with 11:14 to go tied the game at 41.

Three Rivers never trailed again.

"The second group that came off the bench defensively is really what got us started," said Walk. "They went on a run and sparked us. That was a big growing point for them because that was all freshmen on the floor."

Rice led the Lady Raiders with 15 points, 11 in the second half, while Carolyn Overton added nine and the duo of Miller and Becker each chipped in eight.

Three Rivers is back in action Saturday afternoon at 2 p.m. against perennially tough Wabash Valley.

"That's going to be a good early test," Walk said. "They're 20th in the nation. They've got a lot of sophomores coming back. That's going to be a great early-season test for us just to see where we are."

Dexter native Abbie Warren, who transferred to TRC over the summer, is currently in a 'boot' due to an ankle injury and wasn't able to play. Coach Walk says "Abbie Warren will probably be back in a month and a half."

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