

McKENZIE -- Keshia Brown scored a career-high 20 points and Cumberland took the lead after erasing a nine-point second-half deficit, but the Lady Bulldogs were unable to hang on, falling 70-65 at 19th-ranked Bethel University Monday night in women's basketball action.

Cumberland (7-7, 1-4 TranSouth) lost for the third time in four games, all against ranked opponents, after dominating play in the lane where the Lady Bulldogs netted 48 of their points. Brown scored 18 of her 20 points in the second half, leading four double-figure scorers for CU.

Cumberland scored nine of the last 11 points of the first half and trailed just 31-30 at the break. The Bulldogs continued the run after intermission, taking a four-point lead early in the second period, but Bethel answered with a 19-6 run for a 52-43 advantage midway through the half.

CU fought back, mostly behind Brown, as the Lady Bulldogs applied pressure and converted turnovers into easy buckets. An old fashioned three-point play from the junior gave Cumberland a 60-58 lead with 2:28 to play.

But Teena Carter answered right back for the Wildcats (11-6, 2-2) with a basket for the fifth tie of the half. Bethel scored 12 of the final 17 points of the game, including six points from Kashundria Berry.

Nina Djokovic scored a game-high 26 points and added 13 rebounds to lead the Wildcats, while Carter added 13 and Tristian Johnson netted 10. Berry ended the game with just eight points, but four big free throws in the final minute.

Simone Ryan scored 11 points for the Lady Bulldogs, while Allysia Bailey collected 10 points and Stephanie Martin posted 10 points and a team-high nine rebounds.

Njokovic scored 16 of Bethel's points and had eight rebounds in the first half, as the Wildcats led by as many as eight points. But Ryan scored eight straight for the Lady Bulldogs to tie the contest at 15 and Bailey added nine in the period, with CU headed to the locker room trailing just 31-30.

The Bulldogs scored 24 of their points in the paint in the half, all 12 field goals, and were 0-for-4 from 3-point range. Ryan and Brittany Cash also combined for 14 points off the bench for CU.

Cumberland continues a three-game stretch against ranked foes Thursday, hosting top-ranked Union University at the Dallas Floyd Recreation Center.