

FRANKFORT, KY -- Cumberland used a frenzied defensive effort in the second half to overpower Campbellsville 59-46 in Sunday's championship game of the Mid-South Conference women's basketball tournament.

Down eight points at intermission, the No. 6-ranked CU women outscored Campbellsville 39-18 over the final 20 minutes -- improving to 30-2 headed into the NAIA Championships March 13.

"Our kids did a tremendous job with the halfcourt defense," said Coach Jeremy Lewis. "We were in this position twice before in this tournament -- down at halftime. Our kids were comfortable and knew what had to be done."

Top-seeded Cumberland held Campbellsville scoreless for 5:03 and without a field goal over a stretch of 7:33 -- and scored 11 straight points down the stretch.

Jessica Pace and TaCouya Allen each recorded double doubles for Cumberland as Pace racked up 16 points and 14 rebounds. Allen had 12 points and 11 boards as CU out-muscled Campbellsville 45-27 on the boards.

Cassie Cowan was brilliant off the bench in relief of point guard Briannica Tye -- finishing with 10 points on a three-for-three effort from the field.

Tye was forced from the game midway through the second half after picking up her fourth foul, then being assessed a technical -- which counted as her fifth personal foul.

The Tigers led much of the first half and took a 28-20 lead to the break but was unable to find the basket in the second frame. The Tigers took what would prove to be their last lead of the game when senior Mrashi Karumba hit two free throws with 7:46 to play to go up 39-37.

But from there, the Tigers would go more than five minutes without scoring. In the meantime, senior forward Jessica Pace scored five straight to begin an 11-point run, and when reserve guard Casie Cowan nailed a three with 3:03 to play, the Bulldogs had taken command with a 48-39 lead.

To that point, while the Bulldogs had scored 11 over a 6:41 span, the Tigers had managed only 11 in the first 17 minutes of the half.

Kimberland paced a balanced Campbellsville attack with 13 points. The Tigers got 11 each from senior Courtney Clifton and junior Katie Allen.

Cumberland finds out Wednesday, March 9, at 6 p.m. whom and at what time it will play in the opening round of the 33rd annual NAIA National Championships, which begin March 13 in Frankfort.

SEMIFINALS -- CU 60, Shawnee State 59

FRANKFORT, Ky. – Senior guard Briannica Tye sank a 10-foot floater with 6.5 seconds remaining to beat the shot clock and Shawnee State as No. 6-ranked Cumberland University moved into the finals of the Mid-South Conference tournament with a 60-59 win.

The decision came in the first of four semifinal games at the Frankfort Convention Center and is the third game-winning shot for Tye, a 5-3 senior from Aurora, Ill., this season.

The game served as the rubber match between the teams which had each won on the other's court, and ended a three-game season series that was decided by a total of eight points. It also moved the Bulldogs to 11-2 this season in games decided by 10 points or fewer; 12 of those have been against Mid-South Conference competition.

Shawnee State, ranked 13th in the country and seeded fourth in the tournament, got a pair of free throws by senior all-conference center Schera Sampson with 1:28 to play to take a 59-56 lead.

The tosses would be, however, the final points of the game for the Bears.

Top-seeded Cumberland, ranked sixth nationally, responded with a layup by senior forward Jessica Pace with 1:11 to play to pull within one. It was the first Bulldog field goal since the 8:24 mark of the second half.

Cumberland, 29-2, got the ball back and after a miss, called timeout with 14.9 seconds left. On the out-of-bounds set, Tye got the ball on the right wing and hit the floater for the game-winning bucket.

Shawnee State (23-9) was unable to get off a shot.

It was a game of runs, beginning early when Shawnee pushed a lead that ballooned to 13, 24-11, when junior forward Diane Abbady hit the second of two free throws with 7:17 to play. Cumberland, however, countered with a lengthy run of its own, and when senior Josette Campbell nailed a three with 16:57 left in the game, the Bulldogs had taken a 39-32 lead.

In a 10:20 stretch, the Bulldogs had outscored the Bears 28-8.

The game would be tied three more times before Tye put it away in the closing seconds.

Pace led the Bulldogs with 16 points, while Tye's game-winner gave her 14 to go with four rebounds, three assists and three steals. Senior Yalonda Davis came off the bench for 12 points and a team-high four assists.

Senior Simone Ryan scored nine while pulling down nine rebounds.

CU women win MSC tourney

Saturday, March 2, 2013

Sampson recorded a double-double on the day, scoring 27 while grabbing 11 rebounds. Junior Alannah Sheets finished with 11 points, seven assists and six rebounds, with senior Alex Pohl tossing in 10.