

SPORTS EVENTS

GYMNASTICS

The MSU gymnastics team headed to Illinois on Saturday to compete in the Big Ten Championship.

Their score of 195.650 gave the Spartans a sixth place finish in the championship.

The Spartans first showed their skills on the floor. With five out of six MSU competitors scoring a 9.800 or better, the Spartans acquired a bye until they continued competing in the championship on vault and bars.

On vault, junior Rochelle Robinson scored a team best with a score of 9.850 while fellow junior Emily Lopatofsky and senior Katlyn Roggensack scored 9.800. Despite their overall 48.950 post, the Spartans fell short to Illinois' 9.925 vault title.

On the bars, the team scored a 48.725, followed by a 48.825 on the balance beam with the help of Roggensack's season high of 9.825 in the event.

Roggensack set a career high at the competition by finishing 11th overall with a score of 39.150.

Michigan won the championship with Illinois and Penn State taking second and third place respectively.

RESULTS

Sunday

Men's basketball 74, USC 69

Women's basketball 60, Mid. Tenn. State 59

Baseball 7, Oakland 5

Softball 1, Ohio State 9

Saturday

Baseball 9, Oakland 6

Softball 0, Ohio State 8

Women's tennis 3, Iowa 4

Women's gymnastics Big Ten Champ. 6th, 195.650

Friday

Men's basketball 77, Robert Morris 62

Baseball 8, Oakland 4

THIS WEEK

Friday

Men's basketball vs. (Kansas or Dayton), time TBA

Baseball at Illinois, 7 p.m.

Saturday

Baseball at Illinois, 4 p.m.

Softball at Illinois, 6 p.m.

Men's tennis at Northwestern, noon

Women's crew vs. Notre Dame, time TBA

Sunday

Baseball at Illinois, 2:05 p.m.

Softball at Illinois, 3 p.m.

Women's tennis vs. Wisconsin, 11 a.m.

Men's tennis at Wisconsin, noon

Michigan won the championship with Illinois and Penn State taking second and third place respectively.

Michigan won the championship with Illinois and Penn State taking second and third place respectively.

Michigan won the championship with Illinois and Penn State taking second and third place respectively.

Michigan won the championship with Illinois and Penn State taking second and third place respectively.

Michigan won the championship with Illinois and Penn State taking second and third place respectively.

Michigan won the championship with Illinois and Penn State taking second and third place respectively.

Michigan won the championship with Illinois and Penn State taking second and third place respectively.

Michigan won the championship with Illinois and Penn State taking second and third place respectively.

Michigan won the championship with Illinois and Penn State taking second and third place respectively.

Michigan won the championship with Illinois and Penn State taking second and third place respectively.

Michigan won the championship with Illinois and Penn State taking second and third place respectively.

BASEBALL

The MSU baseball team swept 4 games from Oakland, page 6B

# SPORTS

14

WRESTLING  
It had been 14 years since an MSU wrestler brought home a national title before junior Franklin Gomez did Saturday, page 1A

Section B | The State News | www.stateneews.com | March 23, 2009

Monday

## COMEBACK KIDS



JEANA-DEE ALLEN/THE STATE NEWS

Junior forward Alisha Jefferson, right, celebrates the Spartans' comeback win against Middle Tennessee State during the first round of the NCAA Tournament. The Spartans won 60-59.

### Late 3-pointer seals first round win

By Joseph Terry  
THE STATE NEWS

Call it a senior moment. With the score tied in a 57-57 game with Middle Tennessee State, guard Mia Johnson, the MSU women's basketball team's lone senior, got the ball on the wing and fired a three-point shot over an outstretched Blue Raiders defender. Johnson, who missed a three on the previous possession, watched the shot fall effortlessly through the basket, giving the Spartans a 60-57 lead with 1:10 remaining in a game they eventually would go on to win 60-59.

"Well, I don't know (if it was going in), but I was hoping because I was missing them early on," Johnson said. "I didn't

need any other (shot), I needed that one at that time."

But the game wasn't always as close as the final score made it seem.

The Spartans started the game the way their last game finished, committing bad turnovers and missing open shots.

Middle Tennessee forward Alysha Clark, the nation's leading scorer, was owning the low block, scoring six of the first nine points for the Blue Raiders, pulling her team out to a 9-6 lead at the first media timeout.

MSU junior forward Alisha Jefferson tried to answer, scor-

ing eight of the Spartans' first 10 points, but watched as Middle Tennessee went on an 11-0 run to make it 24-10.

The Spartans would go down by as many as 15 points in the first half before sophomore forward Cetera Washington almost single-handedly brought the Spartans back.

The Spartans methodically got themselves back into the game as Washington drew a foul against Clark to get herself to the line, then, after hitting two free throws, got a blocked shot, an offen-

See GAME on page 2B

### Jefferson makes impact all over court

By Joey Nowak  
THE STATE NEWS

With less than two minutes remaining in the game, Middle Tennessee State's Alysha Clark drove to the basket for what could have been one more bucket to add to a stunning point total. Instead, she missed a layup and knocked junior forward Alisha Jefferson to the ground in pursuit of the rebound. The whistle sounded, resulting in Clark's fifth foul and a pivotal moment in MSU's 60-59 NCAA Tournament victory against the Blue Raiders on Sunday at Breslin Center.

Clark was nearly unstoppable at times, scoring 34 points and pulling down 10 rebounds. The Sun Belt Conference Player of the Year lived up to her billing, but there was a feeling of confidence that surged over the Spartans when the superstar fouled out and headed to the bench.

"Them losing her was a huge advantage for us because she is such a great player and a focal point for their team," MSU sophomore forward Kalisha Keane said. "It really helped us to be able to get up and pressure a little bit more and deny a little more because they didn't have that inside presence."

Jefferson was largely responsible for knocking Clark out of the game, drawing three offensive fouls—including two in the final seven minutes.

"I just knew she was cutting across, so I tried to sneak out and get that quick charge on her," Jefferson said. "She was driving and I kind of hid behind (junior center Alyssa DeHaan)



KATIE RAUSCH/THE STATE NEWS

Junior forward Alisha Jefferson flies by Middle Tennessee State's Anne Marie Lanning for a layup during Sunday's game between MSU and the Blue Raiders at Breslin Center.

### Vocal crowd propels MSU to victory

By Joseph Terry  
THE STATE NEWS

Although the home team was dressed in an unfamiliar green jersey, the Breslin Center crowd knew exactly who to cheer for Sunday in the MSU women's basketball team's 60-59 win over Middle Tennessee State in the opening round of the NCAA Tournament.

With MSU down as many as 15 points in the first half, the fans played a huge role in bringing the Spartans back from a horrible start.

"That crowd really helped us today," sophomore forward Cetera Washington said. "We love the home crowd and when we are down in the trenches and we hear them roar, we are able to make some runs and it fires us up even more."

Washington got the crowd into the game with her defense, tying the ball up and nearly getting a steal on a Middle Tennessee handoff at the top of the key, getting the ball back for MSU and exciting the crowd just minutes after the team was facing what seemed like an insurmountable lead.

The fans then blew the roof off the Breslin Center when the Spartans hit back-to-back 3-pointers, bringing the deficit to only five points.

"I've always loved the fans," said sophomore forward Kalisha Keane, who hit the first of the two 3-pointers. "They're just so positive and supportive. They're kind of like our sixth man out there right now. We really appreciate them so much."

Keane got the crowd going even more when she got a steal and dropped in a breakaway layup to give MSU its first lead of the game with a little more than 13 minutes to play in the game.

"They definitely get our adrenaline flowing and it's just really exciting," Keane said. "I think it helps also when the other team can't really hear each other out there because our crowd is so loud."

The Spartans may need their fans to give them just as much of a boost on Tuesday as they face No. 1-seed Duke. The Blue Devils romped Austin Peay 83-42 on Sunday and will bring one of the most talented teams the Spartans have seen to Breslin.

"You're going to walk into a hornets' nest for sure, especially athletically and with pressure," head coach Suzie Merchant said.

"Women's basketball is a pretty small community and you know a No. 1 seed deserves it."