

## Central girls win rematch of state championship

### Lady Warriors defeat Murfreesboro Riverdale 68-60 in overtime

By Andre Johnson

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#### Central girls 68, Riverdale 60

Central girls basketball coach Niki Bray found it difficult to count on fingers the slew of colleges that are showing serious interest in junior guard Nina Davis.

"When teams like Kentucky, Vanderbilt, Baylor, Louisville, and Georgia wanting you, that's says a lot," Bray said of Davis. They don't care that she shoots two-handed free throws. She's very effective."

Bray, in fact, deems Davis the team's "most dependable" player, largely because she has demonstrated time and again her poise and assertiveness in close-game situations.

Saturday at Central was no exception for the 5-foot-11 Davis, who scored a season-high 28 points, including 18 in the second half to help propel the Lady Warriors to gutsy 68-60 overtime victory over Murfreesboro Riverdale in a rematch of last year's Class AAA championship.

Central (2-2), the top-ranked team in The Commercial Appeal's Dandy Dozen, outscored Riverdale, 14-6, in the four-minute overtime session. Davis, one of the top juniors in the country who is also on the ESPN Hoopgurlz watch list for the Class of 2013, scored 10 points in the extra frame and came up with a pivotal steal near midcourt with Central leading 60-57 with 1:02 remaining.

"She as tough as it comes," Bray said of Davis. "She's the type of kid who, when the game is on the line, she's at her best."

Central, ranked 11th nationally in the latest ESPN Hoopgurlz FAB 50 poll, relied on its bench to outscore Riverdale 22-4. LSU signee Danielle Ballard, contributed 12 of those points.

"Right now, Danielle's been coming off the bench, so that's probably the best man around," Bray said. "All in all, we did a good executing during the game."

Central clamped down on Riverdale and Georgia signee Shacobia Barbee, who was held scoreless in overtime despite scoring 12 of her team-best 18 points on 7 of 11 shooting in the second half. Olivia Jones scored 16 points and Alexa Middleton added 13 for Riverdale (4-2 and ranked No. 15 nationally), who will host Central in two weeks in Murfreesboro in the State Farm Holiday Tournament.

Aaliyah Whiteside, a Georgia Tech signee and the nation's 23rd overall prospect, also finished in double figures for Central with 16 points on 7 of 13 shooting.

Ballard, who connected on just 4 of 15 field goals, forced overtime with a running floater in the lane with 19.4 seconds left in the fourth quarter. After Ballard's game-tying basket, Jones missed a potential game-winning layup for Riverdale as time ran out in regulation.



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