Bicandoa Outduels Williams 5-3

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The Blue Raider baseball team ran into a buzzsaw named Ryan Bicandoa on Friday night and dropped their conference home opener to Western Kentucky 5-3. Middle Tennessee's record fell to 20-14 with the loss, 2-5 in the league while the Hilltoppers improved to 24-8, 7-2 in the Sun Belt. Bicandoa hurled a complete game gem in which he allowed only five hits and two earned runs while walking one and striking out 12. His effort gives Western Kentucky a 1-0 advantage in the series heading into Saturday's second game. Nearly matching Bicandoa in the contest was Middle Tennessee starter John Williams. Williams pitched 7-1/3 innings of solid baseball, allowing four runs on nine hits while striking out five. The Hilltoppers struck first in the game, plating a run in the top of the third on an RBI single from Tanner Townsend. However, the Blue Raiders rallied to take a 2-1 lead in the bottom of the frame. A one-out double from Troy Harp and a single from Chuck Akers set up the inning. An infield hit from Nate Jaggers chased Harp to the plate and an RBI groundout from Marshall Nisbett gave the Blue Raiders the lead. The Blue Raiders extended their lead in the bottom of the fifth when Harp came home on an errant pickoff throw from Bicandoa. The Hilltoppers finally got in control in the top of the seventh. The Hilltoppers got two runs across in the frame to knot the score and took a 4-3 lead in the sixth when an RBI single from Antone Towns brought Rafael Villejo, who entered the game as a pinch runner, in to score. WKU added insurance in the top of the ninth after touching reliever Chris Mobley for a run on a Ryan Cattell RBI double. The win pushed Bicandoa's record to 5-2 on the year while John Williams, who has lost consecutive games for the first time in his MT career, drops to 5-2. The teams will renew the series on Saturday afternoon with the first pitch scheduled for 2 PM. **REMINDER**

Fans are invited to take part in the second Middle Tennessee Spring Fling on Saturday beginning with the spring football game at 10 AM. The Lady Raider soccer team will also host a spring game at the same time. Members of the Blue Raider football and baseball teams will be on hand for an autograph session at Reese Smith Field from 12:30 to 1:30 and the gridiron players will pick up their 2001 SBC Championship trophy at 1:45. Coach Andy McCollum will throw out the first pitch at the game as well. The Lady Raider softball team will continue the day's activities with a 3 PM double-

header against UL-Lafayette.

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