

MT Nips WKU 6-4

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Middle Tennessee (21-15; 3-6) salvaged a win in its three-game series with Western Kentucky (25-9; 8-3) 6-4 behind brilliant pitching from Steven Kines and Marshall Nisbett combined with timely hitting from Justin Sims and Nisbett. Sims and Nisbett were the offensive story, combining to drive in all six of Middle Tennessee's runs in the contest, with four coming off of Sims' bat. Sims, who was back in the defensive lineup for the first time in three games, went 1-for-3 at the plate, but produced a run in each at bat. The big blow from the Blue Raider left fielder came in the bottom of the fifth

inning when he ripped a ball off of the right field foul pole for a home run. However, it was starter Steven Kines, who picked up his fourth win of the year, that gave the Blue Raiders the opportunity to win early. After being staked to a 3-0 lead in the bottom of the first, the Germantown native came out firing, facing the minimum number of Hilltoppers through the first three frames. Kines limited the Hilltoppers to only one run on five hits through 5-1/3 innings before being lifted for reliever Chris Mobley. Mobley and Travis Horschel nursed the Blue Raiders through the next 1-1/3 innings before yielding to Nisbett, who rang up seven strikeouts over the final 2-1/3 frames to earn the save. Nisbett was also a big part of the team's early lead. He lined a single into left center that plated Nate Jagers and Josh Archer, giving the Blue Raiders their 3-run lead after the first. The Hilltoppers finally got on the board with a run in the top of the fourth on a solo homer from Ryan Cattell, but Kines shook off the mistake and continued marching through the Western Kentucky order. The Blue Raiders used Sims' blast in the fifth to stretch the lead to 5-1, but WKU would rally to score three runs in the top of the seventh to cut the lead to one. The Blue Raiders added some insurance with a run in the bottom of the seventh when Sims plated Chad Cooper on a fielder's choice. From there it was up to Nisbett and he responded by allowing only one Western Kentucky hitter to put a ball in play against him. Nisbett's save was his second and it preserved a win for Kines who improved to 4-0. Western Kentucky starter Brandon Miller was saddled with the loss to drop to 1-3 on the year. The Blue Raiders will continue their home stand with a Tuesday night game against Belmont before hitting the road again next weekend to take on SBC foe South Alabama in Mobile.

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