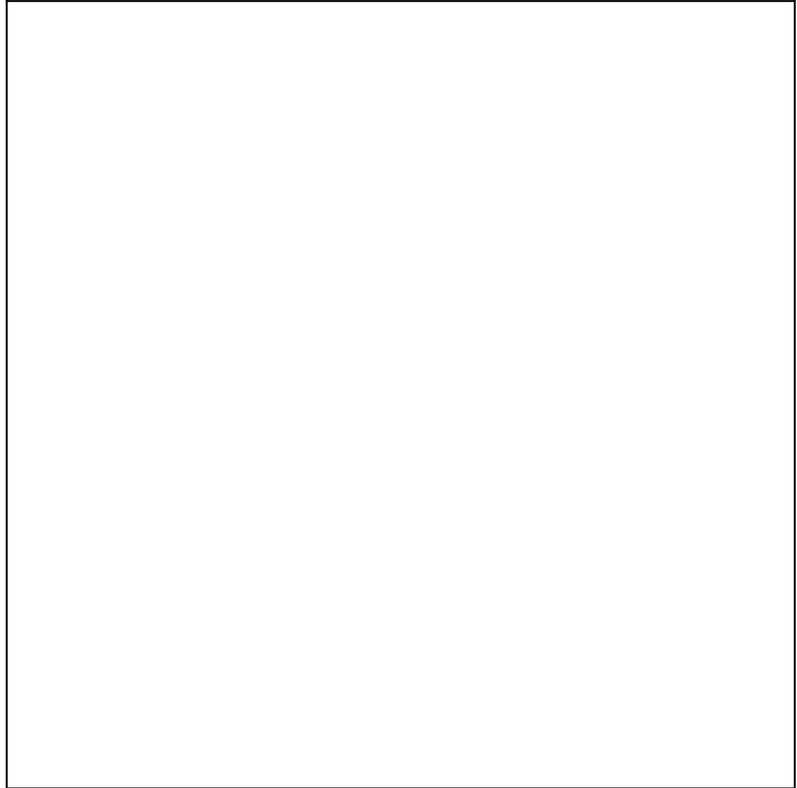


# Lady Raiders Split at Sun Belt Tournament

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**MIAMI, Fla.** - Number four seeded Middle Tennessee softball (25-29) defeated New Mexico State (19-42) 3-1 and lost to No. 20 Louisiana-Lafayette (47-11) 1-0 Thursday in opening round action of the Sun Belt Conference Championships at Panther Park on the campus of Florida International University. Scoreless through four innings, Number one seeded Louisiana-Lafayette picked up the only run of the game on a single by Crystal George, which sent home Jenny Robertson. The Lady Cajuns had runners on first and second with no outs, to start the inning, but back-to-



back strikeouts by senior pitcher Jennifer Martinez shut down the Lady Cajuns, until George's blooper over first base. Martinez proved why she is the most decorated pitcher at Middle Tennessee as she had a brilliant performance against the top team in the conference. Although she picked up the loss and fell to 15-13, she proved to be the more dominant pitcher. She ended the game with 10 strikeouts to Louisiana-Lafayette counterpart Melissa Coronado, who gave up five hits, to Martinez's four, and only struck out one. Earlier in the day, Middle Tennessee received another strong pitching performance from junior hurler Stayc Preator to defeat number five seed New Mexico State 3-1. The current Sun Belt Player of the Week continued to shine in the pitching circle as she only allowed one run on three hits. Her streak of continuous innings without a walk improves to 35 and is a career high for the junior from El Cajon, California. Middle Tennessee got on the board first in the bottom of the third inning when second baseman Lisa Sherman scored on an error by the Lady Aggies. Sherman came back in the fifth inning to hit her first career homerun, when her shot hit the left field foul pole and went over. The Lady Raiders picked up one more run in the fifth when Martinez hit an RBI single to send home catcher Lindsay Azevedo. Sun Belt action continues on Friday when Middle Tennessee faces the winner of Western Kentucky and New Mexico State at 3 p.m.

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