

## FIU Tops MT 5-3

May 17, 2002 · MT Media Relations

Middle Tennessee (26-26; 8-14) managed only four hits against Florida International (37-16; 11-11) on Friday night, but still managed to get the tying run to the plate in the ninth inning before finally succumbing to the Golden Panthers 5-3. The Golden Panthers got on the board in the bottom of the first with a solo homer from Solomon Frieder. The Blue Raiders rallied to knot the score in the top of the second inning. Justin Sims led off the inning by being hit by a pitch. Sims stole second and then advanced to third on a deep fly



ball from Josh Archer. Chad Cooper got the run across with an infield single. With the score tied 1-1, the Golden Panthers broke through in the bottom of the second inning. Hector Nunez led off with a single and advanced to second on an Adam Larson balk. After a popup from Alejandro Suarez, Tommy Duenas delivered a single to put runners at the corners. Deunas then stole second, setting up a two-run single from Skip Adams. The Golden Panthers then took what seemed to be a commanding lead in the bottom of the fourth when Adams delivered a two-run homer over the left field wall. Middle Tennessee finally got back into the game in the top of the seventh when Cooper blasted his second homer in as many games - a two run shot - that put the Blue Raiders within two runs at 5-3. The Blue Raiders kept the pressure on against reliever Josh Banks, who came in to pitch the final frame for starter Derek DeCarlo. The Blue Raiders started the inning with a leadoff double from Marshall Nisbett, who moved to third on a fly ball from Sims. With two outs, Cooper hit a shot toward on the right side of the infield that looked to be yet another RBI single, but FIU first baseman Brad Eldred made an excellent diving play to save the run. DeCarlo improved to 11-0 on the year after pitching eight strong innings, allowing only three runs on three hits while striking out eight. Banks' save was his fourth. Adam Larson pitched 7-1/3 innings, taking the loss to fall to 3-7 on the year. Chris Mobley pitched 2/3 of an inning in relief, coaxing a double play from the only hitter he faced. Cooper led the Blue Raiders offensively with a 2-for-4 effort that included all three RBIs for Middle Tennessee. The Blue Raiders and Golden Panthers will renew the series on Saturday afternoon with a 12 noon first pitch. The series concludes on Sunday afternoon at noon.

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