

Blue Raiders Face Familiar Foe

Top-seeded Middle Tennessee squares off versus fourth-seeded Louisiana-Lafayette in the second round of the 2004 Dodge Sun Belt Championships on Thursday night. The Blue Raiders defeated the Ragin' Cajuns twice in last year's conference tournament in Lafayette, knocking off UL in the first and third rounds on their way to the tourney title. The Cajuns won two-of-three from the Blue Raiders earlier this season in Murfreesboro, including a 14-inning affair on Friday night that was the longest game for Middle Tennessee in almost 20 years. Middle Tennessee is 6-8 versus UL since joining the Sun Belt and 2-0 in the SBC Tournament.

Williams Also Familiar with Cajuns

Senior John Williams gets the ball in Thursday night's second round affair, a familiar opponent for the Murfreesboro lefthander. Williams had probably his worst performance of the season against UL earlier this year, taking a loss on Saturday. He allowed five runs on seven hits in four-plus innings, his first career defeat in four starts against the Cajuns. Williams gave up four earned runs in his first two career starts, wins during the regular season in 2001 and 2003. He then went the route in the third round of the SBC Tournament last season, giving up two runs and striking out four to propel the Blue Raiders into the tourney championship game. His career numbers against UL are 3-1 with a 5.26 ERA in 25.2 innings of work.

In the Series this Year ...

Juniors Eric McNamee and Brett Carroll each had five hits in the series earlier this season in Murfreesboro, with both scoring three runs. Freshman Michael McKenry went 3-for-6 in the series with a grand slam, while Shane Kemp had five RBIs and a pair of home runs. Juniors Danny Borne and Chase Swing each made two appearances in the series with neither getting a decision.

Tourney Notes

Junior Nate Jagers carries a career-high 11-game hitting streak into Thursday's tilt after a 3-for-4 performance in the first round versus Arkansas State. Senior Derek Phillips has hit in four straight games, while senior Chuck Akers has his safely in three consecutive outings ... The Blue Raiders extended their winning streak to five games in the Sun Belt Championships and also improved to 8-3 all-time in the Sun Belt Championships.