

Blue Raiders Fall in Opener

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Jacksonville State's Jessie Corn set down 21 batters in a row in throwing seven innings of two-hit ball, as the visiting Gamecocks pounded out 15 hits to take an 11-5 victory over Middle Tennessee Friday afternoon at Reese Smith Field.

Corn was the big story for JSU (2-3), as he struggled to start the game but found a rhythm at the end of the first inning and quieted the Blue Raiders bats for the next six innings.

Middle Tennessee started quickly in the first with a single to right by Chuck Akers

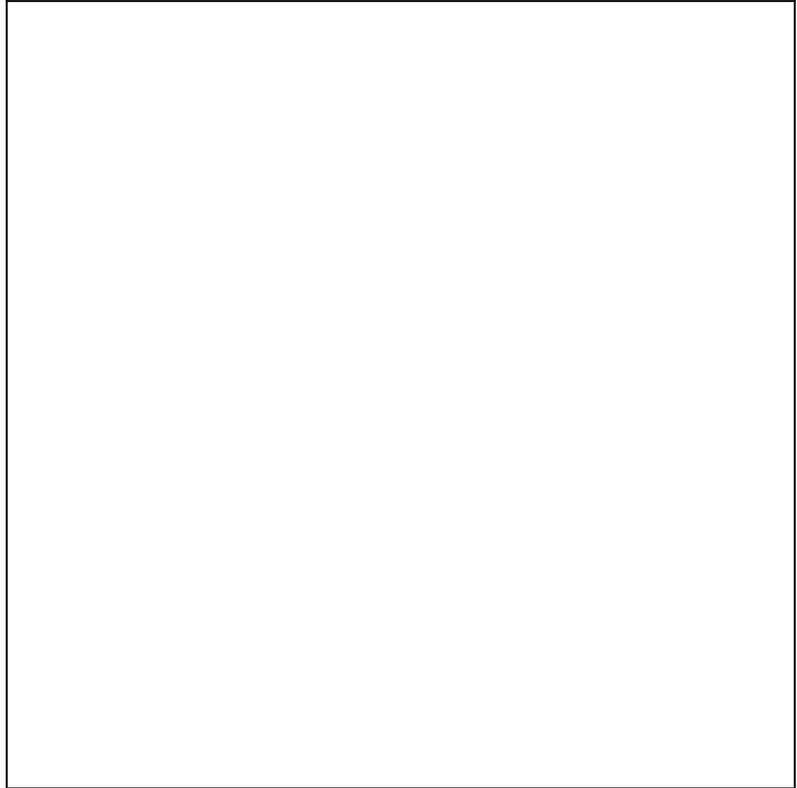
followed by a hit batsman to Chase Eakes. Sophomore Nate Jagers then hit one high and deep for a three-run homer and an early 3-0 Blue Raider advantage.

Josh Archer then scorched a ground ball to third for the first out of the inning, but Corn settled down after that, retiring Chad Cooper and Jerry Knox to end the frame. Middle Tennessee (0-1) would not have another base runner until the bottom of the ninth, as Corn (1-1) struck out 10 in seven innings of work with a nasty breaking pitch that saw the Blue Raiders take seven called third strikes. Josh Forrest came on the get the final six outs for Jacksonville State, allowing two runs on two hits.

Middle Tennessee starter John Williams struggled with control in his four innings of work, walking three and allowing three runs, two earned, on six hits. The junior lefthander exited the game with the score tied at three, as the Gamecocks scored three times in the fourth, including a two-run homer from Jason Horn.

JSU scored twice more in the fifth off Blue Raider Chase Swing (0-1), who suffered the loss in giving up four runs, two earned, on four hits in three frames. Pinch runner B.J. Burns had a straight steal of home in the inning, as the Gamecocks took the lead for good.

JSU scored two more runs in the eighth on a throwing error by Cooper and Bobby Hicks, who went 4-for-5 in the contest, drove in two more with a double to right-center.



Middle Tennessee got its final two runs in the ninth, as Akers led off with an infield single and Jagers homered for the second time in the contest, a line drive over the leftfield wall. The five RBIs for the sophomore was a career-high, and he also extended his hitting streak to four games, dating to last season.

The Blue Raiders made four errors in the game to none for JSU, who had made 16 in their first four outings of the year.

GAME NOTES

The loss for Middle Tennessee was its first in a home opener since February 28, 1996, in an 8-1 defeat to Louisville ... Losing in the season-opener was the first since a 10-5 loss at Southeastern Louisiana on February 18, 2000 ... Nate Jagers extended his hitting streak to four games dating to last year, and Chuck Akers extended his hitting streak to three contests ... Chad Cooper went hitless in four at-bats to end his eight-game hitting streak ... JSU's B.J. Burns had a straight steal of home in the fifth.

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