Blue Raiders Fall, 7-6

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SPRINGFIELD, Mo. - Southwest Missouri State roughed up Blue Raider starter John Williams for seven runs and held on to take a 7-6 victory over Middle Tennessee Friday afternoon at Price Cutter Park.

The Blue Raiders (4-4) got on the board in the first when Chuck Akers led off with a single to left and eventually scored on a double to right from Josh Archer.

The Bears (5-3) got it back and then some in their half of the second, putting together four singles in the inning to push across a pair of runs. Greg Mathis led off with a single to left, but Williams got the next two guys out before three straight singles by SMS.

Tony Piazza blooped a single into short right before Rick Wilson drove in Mathis with a single to center. Adam Pummill grounded through the hole on the right side, plating Piazza for a 2-1 SMS lead.

Middle Tennessee tied it in the fourth with an unearned run. Nate Jaggers singled to leadoff but was forced out on Josh Archer's ground ball. Chad Cooper's dribbler in front of the mound was thrown away by pitcher Brad Ziegler, allowing Archer to move to third. Brett Carroll then blooped a single into center, plating Archer to tie the game at two.

But the Bears came back with four straight singles and a sacrifice fly to get three runs in their half of the frame. Chad Woodmansee singled with one out and then stole second. Piazza singled through the leftside to put runners on the corners before Wilson's infield single plated Woodmansee. A rocket off the bat of Pummill caromed off the knee of Carroll at third, scoring Piazza. Brooks Colvin then hit a fly ball to right, plating Wilson for a 5-2 SMS advantage.

Back-to-back doubles by Jaggers and Archer to leadoff the sixth made it 5-3, and Shane Kemp's two-out single to rightcenter cut the deficit to one.

SMS got the runs back in their half of the inning, with Woodmansee reaching on an error and later

scoring on an infield single by Pummill. Pinch-hitter Justin DePriest drove in Piazza with his third run of the contest with a two-out single off reliever Chase Swing, giving the Bears a 7-4 lead. Blue Raider starter John Williams (0-1) gave up seven runs, five earned, on nine hits with one walk and no strikeouts.

The Blue Raiders continued to battle, though, as Troy Harp was hit by a pitch to leadoff the seventh and Chuck Akers followed with a single to right. Jeff Beachum moved both runners over with a sacrifice bunt, and Jaggers collected his third hit of the day, an RBI single to left, chasing Ziegler (3-1).

The SMS starter allowed 10 hits and struck out six in 6.1 innings. Archer's sacrifice fly to right cut the deficit back to one at 7-6, but Jaggers was caught stealing to end the threat.

Carroll reached on a throwing error by Colvin with one out in the eighth, and Clif Thomas walked with two outs. The Bears brought in closer Shaun Marcum from shortstop to face pinch-hitter Derek Phillips, who flied out to leftfield, ending the inning.

SMS got a walk and a fielder's choice to start the eighth, putting two on with nobody out. But Swing made a diving catch of a Pummill bunt attempt before striking out the next two batters to get out of the inning.

Jaggers got a two-out single in the ninth, but Marcum struck out Archer to end the game. Marcum struck out the side in the ninth to get his third save.

Jaggers went 4-for-5 in the game, while Archer had two hits and three RBIs and Kemp added two hits. For SMS, Piazza had three hits and scored three times, while Pummill added three hits and Wilson had two.

"You had two good two good starting pitchers locked up," Blue Raider head coach Steve Peterson said. "We made some plays and then we had a couple misplayed balls in the infield that cost us.

"Swing came in and pitched well. He got out of some jams and made one bad pitch when he came in the game to give up a hit.

"We kept fighting back. We wouldn't let them put us away. We had some big at-bats, but we also had some bad at-bats. We had chances to win but just couldn't make it happen."

The Blue Raiders and Bears continue their three-game series Saturday at 2 p.m. and conclude the set on Sunday at 1 p.m.

GAME NOTES

Chuck Akers led off the game with a single, his first hit in nine at-bats. It was also his fifth leadoff hit of the season ... Nate Jaggers singled to start the fourth, extending his hitting streak to five games. Jaggers also doubled in the sixth for his fourth multi-hit game of the season. He went 4-for-5 in the contest, his second four-hit game of the year and second in the last four games ... John Williams did not have a strikeout in the contest, the first time in his 26 career starts he did not have a punchout.

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