Taylor, Carroll Homer in 7-4 Blue Raider Win

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Marcus Taylor's two-run homer in the bottom of the eighth provided the winning runs, and Brett Carroll had a pair of round-trippers, as Middle Tennessee scored three in the eighth to take a 7-4 victory over Samford Tuesday afternoon at Reese Smith Field.

The two teams were tied at four in the eighth before Josh Archer singled to right with one out. Taylor followed with a two-run blast over the scoreboard in right. Carroll followed with his second dinger of the contest, an opposite field solo shot for the final run of the game.

Blue Raider reliever Chase Swing (1-1) came in to pick up the victory but started very slowly, allowing the tying run to score in the three-run sixth for the visiting Bulldogs. Swing then retired the next 10 batters to end the game, striking out six.

Samford starter Stephen Artz (0-1) took the loss, allowing all seven runs on 10 hits in 7.1 innings. He walked two and struck out three.

Middle Tennessee (5-6) scored in the first to take an early lead, as Chad Cooper drew a leadoff walk, went to second on a wild pitch, third on a grounder by Chuck Akers, and scored on another groundout from Nate Jaggers.

A leadoff double in the third just inside the rightfield line by Samford's Jeff Dils proved unfruitful for the Bulldogs (4-12), as Blue Raider starter BJ Church worked out of the jam. Church got a groundout sandwiched by a pair of strikeouts to end the threat.

The same two guys were responsible for the Blue Raiders second run of the game, as Cooper singled with one out in the third, went to second on a bunt from Akers and scored on a single to

leftcenter from Jaggers.

A single to leadoff the fourth by Taylor preceded a two-run blast to left from Carroll to give the Blue Raiders a 4-0 lead.

The Bulldogs got on the board in the fifth when Dils reached on a fielder's choice and went to second on an error. Dils went to third on a groundout and scored on a blooper to right by Mario White, cutting the lead to 4-1.

Samford cut into the lead again in the sixth, as Robert Evans was hit by a pitch with one out before Heath Owen belted a two-run shot over the wall in leftcenter, chasing Church from the contest. The Hixson, Tenn, native allowed three runs, two earned, on five hits with five strikeouts in 5.2 innings in his first career start.

Swing entered the game for the Blue Raiders, and Samford's Kip Snowden greeted the Shelbyville, Tenn., native with an infield single off the plate. Justin Klinger then doubled into rightcenter, plating Snowden with the tying run until Taylor's blast in the eighth provided the winning margin.

The Blue Raiders and Bulldogs play again Wednesday at 3 p.m. before Middle Tennessee hosts Purdue in a three-game series over the weekend. Tuesday's contest begins a five-game homestand and a stretch of nine home contests in 10 games.

GAME NOTES

Chris LeGuenec made his second straight start in left field and Marcus Taylor had his third consecutive start as the designated hitter ... Tuesday's contest begins a five-game homestand and a stretch of nine home contests in 10 games ... Freshman BJ Church made his first career start on the mound ... Chad Cooper was the leadoff hitter in the order for the second straight contest ... Cooper extended his hitting streak to three games with a single in the third ... Taylor's hitting streak went to two games with a single in the fourth ... Jaggers collected his fifth multi-hit game of the season and Taylor had his second ... Jaggers left the game in the eighth after injuring his knee in the fifth on a doubleplay turn at second base ... Brett Carroll's two-home run game was the first multi-homer contest of his career ... Taylor had three hits in the contest, the first three-hit game of his career.

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