Aggies Outlast Blue Raiders, 12-8

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee got four runs in the ninth to force extra innings, but visiting New Mexico State scored in the 11th inning to take a 12-8 victory Saturday afternoon at Reese Smith Field.

The Blue Raiders scored six runs in the eighth and ninth to force extra frames, as Brett Carroll homered and Marcus Taylor doubled to provide key runs.

Middle Tennessee was down 8-2 in their half of the eighth before Carroll's eighth home run of the season made it 8-4. Chris Mobley got three outs in the top of the ninth for the Blue Raiders, setting up a dramatic comeback.

Josh Archer doubled to leadoff the ninth and scored on a pair of balks by NMSU reliever James Allen. The two balks seemed to rattle Allen, as the Blue Raiders got three consecutive hits to make it a one-run game.

The Blue Raiders got two-out singles from pinch-hitter Jerry Knox and then Chad Cooper to get the tying run to the plate in the form of Taylor, who doubled down the leftfield line on an 0-2 pitch, plating pinch-runner Chase Eakes and Cooper and making it 8-7.

The Aggies brought on Mike Smith to face Carroll with the tying run at second in Taylor. The runner went to third on a passed ball and Taylor knotted the game at eight, scoring on a passed ball.

Neither team scored in the 10th, but the Aggies pushed across four runs in the 11th to take the win.

Gavin Monjeras doubled in a run in the 11th, and Chris Ewen's two-bagger plated a pair to give the visitors their first conference win of the year.

Both starting pitchers were superb in the first three innings, allowing just three baserunners between the two teams.

The Aggies (22-6, 1-1 SBC) struck for a run in the fourth, as Brad Ditter singled, stole second and scored as Beau Blacken executed the hit-and-run, giving NMSU a 1-0 advantage.

The Blue Raiders (9-10, 1-1) tied the score in their half of the inning, with Taylor drawing a leadoff walk. Chris LeGuenec then executed the hit-and-run, as well, advancing Taylor to third. A Shane Kemp sacrifice fly to center tied the score at one.

New Mexico State broke through for three runs in the fifth with three hits and the aid of two Blue Raider errors.

Mark Keller drew a one-out walk before Blue Raider starter John Williams got a strikeout, his ninth of the game, but Hal Bisnett singled before Ditter drove in a run with a bloop single off the glove of shortstop Cooper in short leftfield.

LeGuenec retrieved the ball and short-hopped his throw to the second baseman, with the ball getting away, allowing Bisnett to score on the play. Billy Becher then chopped a single into right to plate Ditter for a 4-1 Aggie lead.

Middle Tennessee got one run back in the fifth when Taylor singled to left to leadoff and scored on LeGuenec's double down the leftfield line.

But the Aggies got three more runs in the seventh on three hits and another Blue Raider error.

Alex Borgo led off with a single and Bisnett doubled, chasing Williams from the contest after six-plus innings and 12 strikeouts.

Danny Borne relieved Williams and was greeted by another double, this one from Ditter, scoring two for a 6-2 NMSU lead. A run later scored in the inning on a dropped throw from Borne.

NMSU added another run in the eighth when Keller and Ditter both walked and Becher singled to right, driving home the run for an 8-2 Aggie advantage.

Jackson struck out seven in eight innings, allowing four runs on five hits with two walks and got no decision because of Middle Tennessee's big ninth inning. Allen allowed four hits and four runs in 0.2 innings. Smith (3-1) got the win, getting seven outs. Smith settled down after the ninth inning and struck out three while allowing two hits.

Williams struck out 12 in six-plus innings of work, deserving a better fate in a game he pitched very well. The junior ended up allowing six runs, five earned, on eight hits with two walks. Danny Borne gave up two runs on two hits in two innings. Chris Mobley (1-2) suffered the loss, giving up four runs on just two hits in two-plus innings. Shay Horseman got the final three outs for the Blue Raiders.

The two teams conclude their three-game series Sunday at 1 p.m. at Reese Smith Field. The Blue Raiders then hit the road for a seven-game swing starting Tuesday at Memphis.

GAME NOTES

Chris LeGuenec hit cleanup for the first time this season and had three hits with one RBI ... John Williams struck out 12 in the outing Saturday, his second straight double-digit strikeout performance against the Aggies. The junior had 13 K's last year in Las Cruces and now has 32 strikeouts in 19.2 IP ... Brett Carroll extended his hitting streak to six games with a home run in the eighth ... Chad Cooper extended his hitting streak to six games with a bloop single in the ninth.

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