

Lipscomb Defeats Blue Raiders, 11-8

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. -

Lipscomb erased a three-run deficit with seven runs in two innings, aided by five hits, two hit batsman and just two hits, to defeat Middle Tennessee, 11-8, Tuesday afternoon at Dugan Field in front of 437.

The Blue Raiders (11-15) held leads of 5-2 and 7-4 before the homestanding Bisons erupted for four runs on just one hit in the sixth, then added to the lead with three more runs on the seventh, again with just one hit.

Brian Passons walked to leadoff the sixth for Lipscomb, stole second, went to third when Blue Raider reliever Jeff Kasser's pickoff throw went into centerfield, and scored on a sacrifice fly to right by Nathan McCorkle.

Todd Boucher was hit later in the inning before Patrick O'Rourke drew the second walk of the frame from Kasser. Ben Blumenthal then collected his third hit of the contest, a double just inside the leftfield line, plating two runs and tying the contest at seven.

Two more walks loaded the bases before Kyle Jackson was hit by Chase Swing on an 0-2 pitch, forcing in a run and giving the Bisons the lead for good, 8-7.

Lipscomb (10-19) added to the lead in the seventh when a hit batter, a single and an intentional walk loaded the bases. Blumenthal then laid down the suicide squeeze, plating Chris Parker. Ryan Boyer followed with a soft single into leftcenter, scoring two runs for an 11-7 LU advantage.

Middle Tennessee got one run back in the eighth, as Shane Kemp reached on a beautiful bunt single down the third base line and went to second on a groundout by Derek Phillips. Chuck Akers then singled to center, plating the run, but that would be all the Blue Raiders get could against the third Bisons hurler of the game, Seth Kuwik.

Blue Raider starter BJ Church worked five innings and allowed four runs on five hits. The freshman

struck out six and walked four and was in line for the win until the home team erased the deficit in the sixth. Kasser (0-1) gave up four runs in two-thirds of an inning, walking three and hitting a batter.

Swing came on in relief of Kasser to get out of the six-inning jam and gave up three runs on two hits. Swing walked two, hit a batter and struck out four in 2.1 innings.

Lipscomb starter Logan Good got knocked around in his two innings of work, allowing five runs on four hits. David Ayre (3-2) came on to go four innings, giving up two runs on six hits and was the beneficiary of the big comeback before giving way to Kuwik for the final three innings.

Kuwik got his third save of the year, allowing one run on three hits with three strikeouts.

"We swung the bats good enough, but not good enough," Blue Raider head coach Steve Peterson said. "BJ struggled through five innings and hurt himself with walks.

"The whole staff was hurt by the walks and hit batsmen and when you mix in a couple of errors, that put us in trouble the whole time. The freebie war of walks and hit batsmen made the difference. [Lipscomb] also got the big hit when they needed it, and we just didn't play good baseball.

"They have an outstanding closer and once they got the lead, you knew he was coming. He came in and shut the door on us and had a little cushion to work with to do it. And our bullpen was just very poor."

The Bisons got on the board early with two runs in the bottom of the first. Jackson drew a leadoff walk and moved to third on Parker's double just inside the leftfield line. Jackson scored on a wild pitch and McCorkle plated the second run with a ground ball.

But the Blue Raiders exploded for five runs in the second, as a pair of batters drove in two runs apiece.

Josh Archer extended his hitting streak to nine games with a double to deep centerfield, off the glove of a diving Passons. Brett Carroll followed with a walk before Jeff Beachum's single to center plated Archer.

Kemp then doubled down the leftfield line, driving home two runs, with Kemp advancing to third on the throw to the plate. After a strikeout, Akers reached when his check swing grounder in front of the plate was fielded by Good, who tossed to the plate because he thought Kemp was trying to score.

Chad Cooper followed with a double over the outstretched Passons in deep center, scoring two runs for a 5-2 Blue Raider lead.

Archer added to the lead in the third when the sophomore unloaded on a hanging changeup and parked it over the leftfield fence for a 6-1 Middle Tennessee advantage.

Lipscomb cut into the lead in the fourth when Blumenthal led off with a single and Boyer was hit by a Church pitch. Jackson grounded sharply to first base, where Archer made a diving stop. But Archer's throw to second to get the force was low, loading the bases with just one out.

Passons then walked, forcing in a run, before Parker singled to center, scoring Boyer and cutting the Blue Raider lead to 6-4.

Middle Tennessee got a run back in the fifth when Archer walked and scored on Carroll's double over the third base bag, giving the Blue Raiders a three-run edge for the second time in the contest.

Archer had two hits and tied a career-high with three runs scored to lead the Blue Raiders, while Cooper, Beachum, Kemp and Akers added two hits each. Kemp also scored twice, while Kemp and Cooper each drove in a pair of runs.

Blumenthal went 3-for-3 with three RBIs and two runs scored for the winners, with Parker and McCorkle adding two hits apiece. Parker scored twice and McCorkle drove in two runs.

The Blue Raiders take on Austin Peay Wednesday in Clarksville at 6:30 p.m. at Raymond C. Hand Park. Middle Tennessee hosts Florida International in a Sun Belt conference series this weekend at Reese Smith Field, with starting times of 7 p.m. on Friday, 2 p.m. on Saturday and noon on Sunday.

GAME NOTES

Assistant coach Kevin Erminio and his wife, Jennifer, had their second son Tuesday morning. All parties involved are doing well ... Nate Jagers returned to the lineup as the designated hitter after missing the past 14 games with an ankle injury ... Marcus Taylor played leftfield for the first time this season and was in the outfield for the first time since March 2 against Kent State ... Josh Archer doubled in the second to extend his hitting streak to nine games ... Jeff Beachum singled in the second to extend his hitting streak to seven games ... Chad Cooper's double in the second extended his hitting streak to 13 games ... Chuck Akers made his hitting streak four games with a single in the fourth ... Cooper had two RBIs in the contest, his third multi-RBI game of the year, and Shane Kemp also drove in two runs for his second multi-RBI contest of the season ... The Blue Raiders outhit Lipscomb, 13-8, in the contest and lost, marking the sixth time this season the Blue Raiders have had as many hits or outhit the opponent and lost.

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