

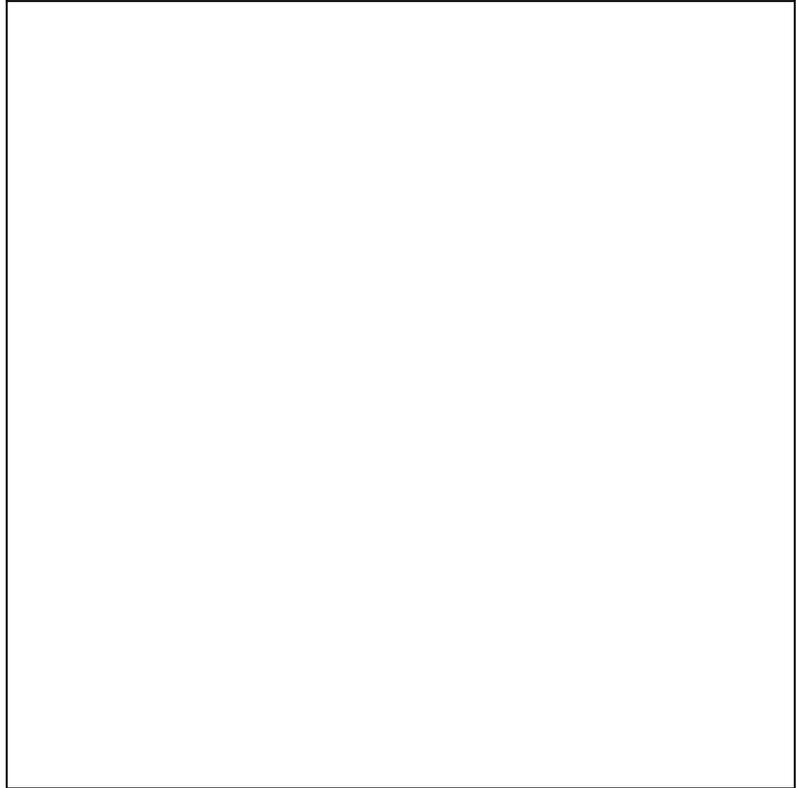
Knox Homer Lifts Blue Raiders

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Jerry Knox belted a two-run homer in a three-run eighth inning, as Middle Tennessee erased a five-run deficit en route to a 8-6 victory over Austin Peay Wednesday night at Reese Smith Field.

Knox tossed two shutout innings earlier in the contest before entering the game as the designated hitter in the sixth. The senior drove in a run in that inning with a groundout before jumping into the hero's role with a two-run blast deep into the night to give Middle Tennessee the victory.



Austin Peay (16-21-1) jumped out to a 6-1 lead after three-and-a-half innings thanks to an 8-for-9 effort by the one through three hitters in the lineup in the first four innings. Knox was the first Blue Raider out of the bullpen and started a string of five scoreless innings, with the fourth Middle Tennessee (21-21) hurler of the game, Danny Borne, picking up the win after getting two outs in the eighth. Chase Swing got the final three outs for his fifth save of the year and fourth in his last five outings.

The win was also Middle Tennessee's first this season in 18 tries when trailing after seven innings.

The Blue Raiders got single runs in the fourth and fifth and two in the sixth to make it a 6-5 game heading into the eighth. Chad Cooper led off the inning with a single against APSU reliever Adam Muston, and Derek Phillips followed with a sacrifice bunt. Knox then belted a 1-2 pitch well over the rightfield wall for a one-run lead.

Shane Kemp then singled and after the second out of the inning, Kemp was stealing when Chuck Akers bounced a high chopper between the mound and third base. Kemp never slowed down rounding second, went to third and scored when Muston's throw to first got away, giving the Blue Raiders the 8-6 lead.

Muston (0-2) got his second loss in as many appearances against Middle Tennessee this season.

The righthander faced six batters in Clarksville on April 2, allowing six runs without recording an out in a 12-run inning for the Blue Raiders and was also saddled with the loss in the 16-7 Middle Tennessee win that night.

Jeff Beachum, Brett Carroll, Cooper and Kemp all had a pair of hits in the win, while Carroll, Cooper and Kemp all scored twice.

The top three in the Gobs order - Ron Bethke, Travis Beech and A.J. Ellis - went 11-for-14 with five runs scored and four RBIs, but it wasn't enough for the visitors.

The visiting Gobs got on the board early with two runs in the first, as Bethke and Beech both singled to leadoff the game. Ellis followed with another single to plate the first run of the game, and Beech scored on a groundout by Chris Hyde.

The Blue Raiders got a run back in the bottom of the first after Akers drew a one-out walk and Josh Archer's two-out single to left got by the Peay leftfielder, allowing Akers to score from first.

The Gobs scored once in the third when Beech and Ellis both singled with one out Beech later scored on a sacrifice fly to left by Tommy Smith.

A walk to James Ray followed by singles from Bethke and Beech scored another run in the fourth. Ellis drove home two more runs with a double to leftcenter, giving APSU a 6-1 advantage.

Carroll and Kemp each hit solo homers in the fourth and fifth, respectively, for the Blue Raiders, cutting the deficit to 6-3. Kemp's fifth round-tripper of the year chased Gobs starter Cody Goins, who lasted four-plus innings and allowed three runs on four hits with five strikeouts.

Carroll and Cooper both singled to start the sixth, putting runners on the corners. A Phillips fly ball to right was dropped by Bethke, allowing Carroll to score and Cooper to advance all the way to third. Cooper then scored on a groundout by Knox, cutting the Gobs lead to 6-5.

Blue Raider starter Shay Horseman had a rough outing, allowing six runs, four earned, in four innings of work. The freshman struck out three and walked one but got off the hook thanks to the five scoreless innings tossed by the bullpen and the comeback efforts of his teammates.

Middle Tennessee begins a three-game weekend series at Western Kentucky Friday night at 6 p.m. in Bowling Green, Ky. Saturday's game starts at 2 p.m., with Sunday's finale at 1 p.m.

GAME NOTES

The Blue Raiders used their 36th different lineup in 42 games Wednesday night ... Jeff Beachum's infield single in the fifth extended his hitting streak to six games.

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