Record 8 Home Runs in Blue Raiders' 13-10 Win

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The Blue Raiders knocked off Cumberland University on Wednesday, cranking out a record-setting eight home runs in the process.

After the dust settled, Renick, Thomas, Sims, Harp, Smeets, and Howarth had all homered for the Blue Raiders, sending better than half of the team's hits out of the confines of Cumberland's Hunt Stadium.

Following a 40-minute pre-game delay because of an umpire mix-up, Josh Renick led off the game for Middle Tennessee (25-8) with his fifth home run of the year to give the Blue Raiders a 1-0 edge. With two outs, Kyle Thomas knocked his third round-tripper of the season, driving in Justin Sims, who hit a single earlier in the inning.

The Bulldogs (31-12) had no intention of going out without a fight and lit up Middle Tennessee starting pitcher Steven Kines for five runs in the bottom of the opening frame. However, the Bulldogs' only earned two of the runs because of a Blue Raider error that extended the inning.

MT continued its attack in the second. Chuck Akers led off with a single, but two quick outs looked to dim the Blue Raiders' chances in the inning. However, Renick kept the scoring alive with his second homer of the game, and his third in back-to-back contests, knotting the score at five runs each.

Cumberland retook the lead in the bottom of the second. Juan Campos singled with one out and advanced to third following Chris Smith's base hit and a Middle Tennessee error that allowed Campos to advance an extra base. A sacrifice fly from Gilbert Miranda plated one Cumberland run.

Neither team could push a run over in the third, but the Blue Raiders came up big in the top of the fourth inning. Jason Howarth led off with his second home run of the year, followed by a single from Akers. Tjerk Smeets hit his second homer in as many games to drive in two more MT runs.

Troy Harp hit his first career home run to keep the Bulldogs on the defensive. Cumberland did

manage to get two outs in the inning before Justin Sims banged his team-leading ninth homer. It was the fourth of the frame and gave the Blue Raiders a 10-6 lead.

Pitcher Jason Kuhn came on to relieve Kines to start the bottom of the fourth, but couldn't hold the Bulldogs in check.

Thomas led off MT's fifth inning with his second bomb of the game before two quick outs seemed to let the air out of the Blue Raiders in the inning. However, a fielding miscue allowed Smeets to reach first. Three straight walks from reliever Cam Suggs forced Smeets across home plate and another error allowed Harp to score, increasing the Blue Raider lead to 13-6.

The Bulldogs would rally to keep it close.

A double and a single plated a run for the Bulldogs in the bottom of the seventh. The eighth inning saw a leadoff single and back-to-back home runs from Campos and Smith to bring the Bulldogs within three, 13-10.

Scoring for teams ended after the eighth, allowing the Blue Raiders to hang on for the win.

Kuhn, the most effective of four Blue Raider hurlers, earned the win to go to 3-2. Efren Canchola (3-2) took the loss for the Bulldogs.

Middle Tennessee begins another Sun Belt Conference road series this Friday. The series with Arkansas-Little-Rock continues through Sunday.

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