

Preator Pitches Beauty in Losing Effort

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BOWLING GREEN, Ky. - Western Kentucky's (30-31) Adrienne Lathrop hit an RBI single in the bottom of the 13th inning to defeat Middle Tennessee (33-21) in the quarterfinals of the Sun Belt Conference Tournament Friday at WKU Softball Field.

Senior hurler Stayc Preator completed her career as a Lady Raider by throwing a career-high, and school record 13 innings in the losing effort. Preator had 10 strikeouts and allowed just six hits, but the last one proved to be the most costly. She ends the season 22-10 and her 191 strikeouts ties her for fifth place for strikeouts in a season in the Lady Raider record books.

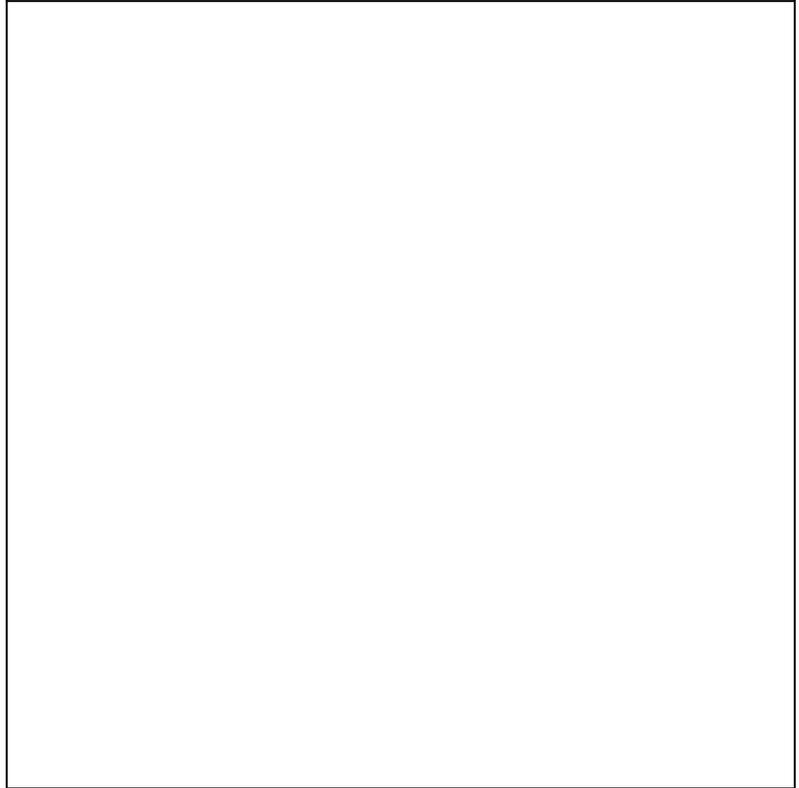
Middle Tennessee left 13 runners on base and missed on key scoring opportunities that could have meant a win for the Lady Raiders. The best scoring chance came in the top of the fourth inning when Kip Phillips was thrown out at home on a strike by centerfielder Riley Garcia to catcher Samantha Hanson. The Lady Raiders also had the bases loaded in the top of the seventh inning, with one out, but couldn't push a run across.

Middle Tennessee advanced to the quarterfinals of the Sun Belt Conference Tournament with a 5-1 win over No. 5 seed New Mexico State in the morning game. The Lady Raiders will play Western Kentucky at 4 p.m.

Cortney Mitchell put the Lady Raiders on the board in the bottom of the first inning when she hit her 26th double of the season to plate Kip Phillips. Mitchell would come back in the second inning and hit her 27th of the season in another RBI effort.

In total, the Lady Raiders scored four runs in the bottom of the second inning. Catcher Leah Grothause got the inning started when reached base on a New Mexico State error. After Grothause stole second she moved to third on a sacrifice bunt by Jennifer Dorais and scored on a RBI by Megan Cherinka. Phillips picked up an RBI on a single, which scored Tompkins and Buhl scored on a New Mexico State miscue. Mitchell rounded out the scoring when her double plated Phillips.

Freshman Tiffany Childress took the win and improves to 5-3. She went four innings allowing no runs and striking out two. Fellow freshman Leora Brannon notched the first save of her career when she tossed three innings allowing one run and one hit.



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