

Kline, Cooper Lead 6-4 Victory

May 22, 2003 · MT Media Relations

LAFAYETTE, La. - Steve Kline worked a career-long eight innings and Chad Cooper had three hits and scored three runs, as sixth-seeded Middle Tennessee knocked off third-seeded and host Louisiana-Lafayette, 6-4, Wednesday evening in the first round of the Sun Belt Conference Tournament at M.L. 'Tigue' Moore Field.

Kline pitched to the first batter in the ninth, Kevin Preau, who bounced a chopper in front of the plate. Kline had trouble fielding the spinner and threw it away at first. Preau went all the way to third when Marcus Taylor fumbled the ball in rightfield, putting the go-ahead run at the plate for the Ragin' Cajuns.

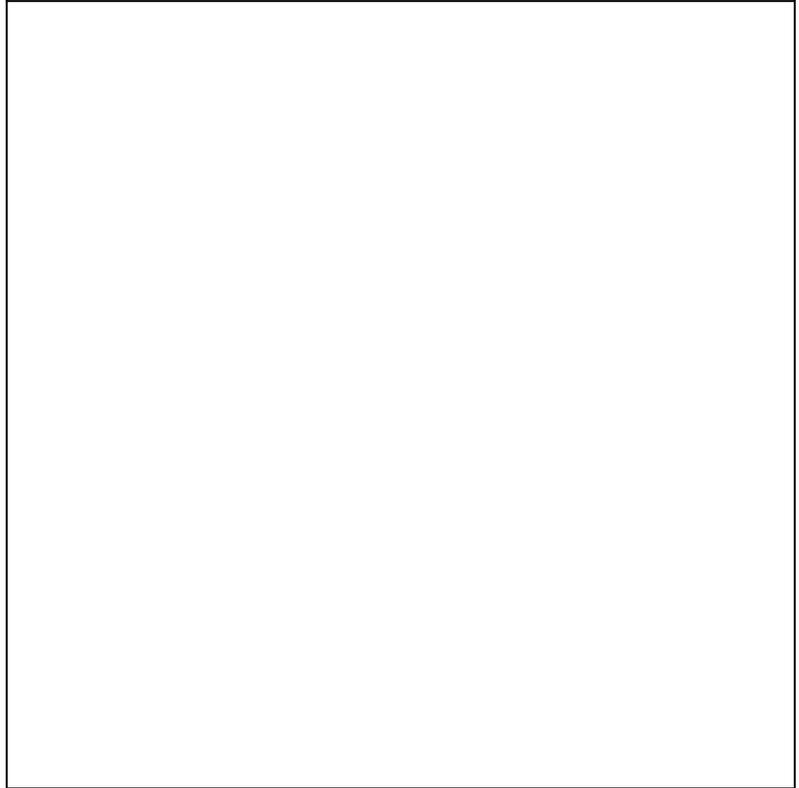
The Blue Raiders turned to closer Chase Swing, who had a rough outing in his last appearance three days ago at Arkansas-Little Rock. Swing got behind 3-0 to the first man he faced, Jason Wilson, but came back to strikeout the eighth man in the Lafayette order.

The sophomore righthander then struck out pinch-hitter Rhett Buras and leadoff man Dallas Morris, giving the Blue Raiders their first win in the conference tourney since advancing to the championship game of the 2001 tournament, also in Lafayette. Middle Tennessee lost in the 2001 title game and went two-and-out last year in Mobile, Ala.

Cooper helped the Blue Raider offense get going early and stay hot, providing Kline with a lead from the get-go.

Jeff Beachum hit the first pitch of the game up the middle for a single and went to second on a groundout by Chuck Akers. Cooper then singled down the rightfield line, plating Beachum. Josh Archer followed with a double to right center, scoring Cooper for an early 2-0 Middle Tennessee lead.

But the Cajuns came right back in their half of the inning, as Morris hit the first pitch he saw through



the middle for a single. Kline spent a lot of time and energy trying to keep Morris close to the bag at first and left a fastball over the middle for Corey Coles, who deposited it over the wall in rightcenter, tying the score at two.

Bryan Sneed followed with a single and it looked like Kline may be in trouble, but a strikeout and a doubleplay got the sophomore lefty out of the inning without further damage.

Middle Tennessee went back ahead for good in the second, as Nate Jagers and Chris LeGuenec both singled to start the frame and Troy Harp sacrificed both runners up a base. Beachum drove home Jagers with a groundout and a one-run lead.

Cooper's triple off the rightfield wall to start the third chased Ragin' Cajun starter Jordy Templet (6-5), who took the loss in allowing four runs on six hits in two-plus innings, his second shortest outing of the year.

Archer blooped a single off the end of the bat off reliever Kraig Schambough, scoring Cooper for a 4-3 Blue Raider lead.

The Cajuns cut into the lead in their half of the third, as Ray Dees battled from an 0-2 count and eventually doubled to right. Morris bunted his way on, moving Dees to third, and Coles' rocket off the leg of Blue Raider third baseman Brett Carroll scored the run.

Cooper again provided the Blue Raiders with a momentum-turning hit in the fifth, blasting a first-pitch breaking ball from Schambough over the 375-sign in leftcenter for a 5-3 Middle Tennessee advantage.

Lafayette's Brad Saloom blooped in a hit in the sixth and scored on Kevin Preau's two-out double off the base of the right-centerfield wall, cutting the Blue Raider lead to one again.

Both teams had a baserunner in the eighth via a hit-batsman to leadoff the frame, but neither could score the run.

In the ninth the Blue Raiders added a huge insurance run, as Jagers legged out an infield single to leadoff and stole second. Harp reached on an error and a wild pitch from Schambough put runners on second and third when Akers lined a single to left, his only hit of the night, scoring Jagers to give Middle Tennessee a two-run cushion heading to the ninth.

The insurance run became even larger after the miscues from Kline and Taylor to start the bottom of the ninth, but Swing was able to work around the jam to pick up his ninth save of the year and eighth in his last 10 appearances.

Jagers went 3-for-4 and scored twice, while Archer had two hits and two RBIs in perhaps the biggest and certainly the most exciting win of the year for the Blue Raiders in front of 1792 on Lafayette's home field. LeGuenec also went 2-for-2 and is now 5-for-13 this season against the Cajuns.

Kline (7-3) worked eight-plus, throwing 116 pitches in the longest outing of his career. The

Murfreesboro native allowed four runs on nine hits and struck out five with one walk.

The Blue Raiders advance in the winner's bracket to play Arkansas-Little Rock at 3:30 p.m. Thursday. UALR defeated New Mexico State, 5-1, Wednesday afternoon.

GAME NOTES

Jeff Beachum extended his hitting streak to five games with a leadoff single in the first ... Chad Cooper extended his hitting streak to six games with a single in the first. Cooper singled, tripled and homered in his first three at-bats of the night ... Josh Archer extended his hitting streak to nine games with a double in the first. Archer is 19-for-41 (.463) during the stretch with 16 RBIs and seven doubles ... Nate Jagers extended his hitting streak with a leadoff single in the second ... Middle Tennessee moved to 26-1 this season when leading after seven innings ... Starting pitcher Steve Kline worked a career-high eight-plus innings in the game, tossing 116 pitches in the process. Kline's previous long outing was 7.1 innings, a feat he performed twice with the last time coming three weeks ago against New Orleans ... Closer Chase Swing picked up his ninth save of the year, moving him within one of single-season saves leader George Oleksik. It also moved Swing into a tie third on the career-saves with Kevin Davis, trailing only Oleksik and Marty Smith ... With the victory, Middle Tennessee moved to 4-3 all-time in Sun Belt Conference Tournament action. The win was also Steve Peterson's 499th as head coach at Middle Tennessee.

Printed on July 29, 2014

Original URL: <http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/2038>