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Blue Raiders Out-Dueled by Cavaliers 11-10

Ledbetter hits three-run homer in loss

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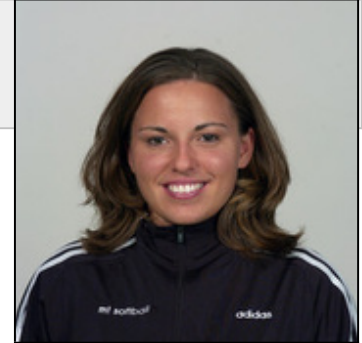
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TUCSON, Ariz. - It was a high-scoring affair, but Middle Tennessee softball (1-5) couldn't hold off a late rally by Virginia (4-3), falling 11-10 to the Cavaliers Friday in the first game of the Worth Wildcat Tournament.

Middle Tennessee looked to be assured a victory after a dramatic comeback, but Virginia had other plans. The Cavaliers scored four runs in the bottom of the seventh inning to take the win. Elean Crocket hit an RBI single to break a 10-10 tie for the win.

Down 7-3 to at the top of sixth inning, it looked bleak for the Blue Raiders. However, just as the team proved in its fall campaign, this club may be down but never out. A fielding error by Virginia put [Katie Mielke](#) on first and after a single by [Martha Davis](#) and the second error of the inning by Virginia, the Blue Raiders had runners at second and third.



Muriel Ledbetter hit a three-run homerun in Middle Tennessee's 11-10 loss to Virginia Friday. (MT Media Relations) 

Freshman Jessica Ives came into the game as a pinch hitter and delivered with a two RBI double to pull the Blue Raiders within two runs, 7-5. Senior [Shelby Stiner](#) got her first hit of the game and advanced to second on the throw, which moved [Kristine Reed](#), pinch running for Ives, to third. Whitney Darlington hit her first triple as a Blue Raider and it scored Stiner and Reed to tie the game at seven. Still with no outs, Ashley Cline was hit by a pitch and stole her fifth base of the season to put runners at second and third. This set up a game changing performance with the [Muriel Ledbetter](#) homerun to give the Blue Raiders the lead. The Ledbetter homerun is her second of the season and 15th of her career.

Middle Tennessee wasted no time against Virginia, jumping on the Cavaliers in the first inning. Cline drew a one out walk and moved to third thanks to a double by sophomore [Justine Cerda](#). Cline scored on a passed ball by Virginia catcher Michelle Salmiery.

A one out double by catcher [Katie Mielke](#), in the second inning, led to the Blue Raiders second run of the game. Mielke advanced to third base off a ground out by [Martha Davis](#) and scored thanks to an RBI single by [Melissa Weiland](#).

It was a double by Cline, her first two-bagger of the season that started things in the third inning for the Blue Raiders. A sacrifice bunt by Cerda moved Cline to third and she scored her second run of the game after a Virginia error.

Virginia tied the game in the bottom of the third inning. Meghan O'Leary singled and moved to second on a Blue Raider throwing error. With one out Cavalier Elea Crockett got the second hit of the inning and O'Leary moved to third. Kelly Haller got a hit up the middle scoring O'Leary. With one out, Head Coach Leigh Podlesny replaced starting pitcher Lindsey Vander Lugt with Sam Floyd. A single by Amy McKean loaded the bases and Abby Snyder hit a two RBI single to tie the game.

The Cavaliers took the lead start their half of the fourth inning. Floyd gave up a homerun to Salmiery to give Virginia a 4-3 lead and was replaced by Vander Lugt, who returned to the game after leaving in the third inning. Virginia added three more runs in the inning.

Junior pitcher Amy Candioto came into the game in the bottom of the seventh inning, in relief for Vander Lugt, and takes the loss. She falls to 0-1 on the season. Vander Lugt tossed 5.2 innings allowing eight runs on nine hits and struck out two.

Four Blue Raiders had two hits in the game as Darlington, Cline, Stiner and Mielke each had a multiple hit game. Cline also scored three runs in the game and Stiner stole her first base of the season.

The Blue Raiders will conclude the first day of the tournament at the University of Arizona with Temple.

NOTES: Middle Tennessee ended its 14 inning drought without a run, scoring a run in the first inning against Virginia ... [Justine Cerda](#) perfected two sacrifice bunts against Virginia ... Ashley Cline had her first multiple hit game of the season with a single and a double against Virginia, she also scored three runs ... Middle Tennessee had five multiple base hits in the game with doubles from [Justine Cerda](#), [Katie Mielke](#) and Ashley Cline, while Whitney Darlington hit a triple and [Muriel Ledbetter](#) hit a homerun ... Middle Tennessee's 10 runs and 14 hits are the most by the Blue Raiders this season.

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