

Scott, Kendrick Lead 12-1 Opening Victory

Blue Raiders collect 13 hits, Scott allows just two hits in six innings

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Matt Scott tossed six strong innings, allowing just two hits, and Middle Tennessee scored four times in the fifth and five runs in the eighth en route to a season-opening 12-1 victory over Jacksonville State Friday. Scott (1-0) allowed a pair of doubles in the top of the first and JSU's only run of the game before setting down 14 of the 15 batters over the next five innings. Scott walked Jake Ball in the second and then erased him on a 6-4-3 doubleplay. Shay Horseman tossed two scoreless innings for the Blue Raiders and Brad Robinson recorded the final



three outs. JSU's Donovan Hand (0-1) took the loss, allowing three runs in the first before settling down over the next three innings. Hand ran into trouble in the fifth when Middle Tennessee scored four times on just two hits thanks to a pair of walks and a two-run double from Dillon Heath. Wayne Kendrick collected four of Middle Tennessee's 13 hits in the contest and also drove in three runs, while Heath recorded three hits with three RBIs. New leadoff hitter Matt Ray was 2-for-3 with three runs scored and a walk. "Both starting pitchers are seasoned veterans and were probably a little jacked up with it being opening day," head coach Steve Peterson said. "They were both probably overthrowing a little bit. They're rhythm was off and the ball was up, but once Matt [Scott] settled down and let his arm catch up, he got the ball down and everything was alright. We were lucky the first two balls [by Jacksonville State] stayed in the park." The Gamecocks got on the board first with doubles from Bert Smith and Eric Beck for an early lead. But the Blue Raiders came back with three runs on four hits in the bottom of the inning. Ray reached on an infield single before Campbell fisted a single into short centerfield. Kendrick then laced a triple down the rightfield line, scoring a pair, before a grounder by Adam Warren plated Kendrick for a 3-1 lead. Neither team threatened until Middle Tennessee exploded for four runs in the fifth, chasing Hand from the contest. Ray drew a leadoff walk and Kendrick singled to left before a walk to Warren loaded the bases. Heath then doubled into rightcenter, scoring two runs, and after a pitching change, Warren scored on a wild pitch. Doug Birkofer drove in the last run with a sacrifice fly for a 7-1 Blue Raiders advantage. After a

Birkofer walk to leadoff the eighth, Rawley Bishop belted the first pitch over the 24-foot wall in center for a two-run shot and a 9-1 Blue Raiders lead in the eighth. Later in the inning, Zach Barrett reached on an error, Alex Watson singled and Ray was hit to load the bases. Kendrick's single off the third baseman's glove plated one run, Warren drove in Watson with a sacrifice fly and Heath's single to center plated run for the final score. The two teams play again Saturday at 2 p.m. and conclude the series Sunday at 1 p.m.

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