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Blue Raiders fall to Falcons, 14-12

Eight runs in last three innings not enough

MT Media Relations



Grant Box collected his first hit career hit on Saturday, a three-run home run in the ninth inning, in Middle Tennessee's 14-12 loss to Bowling Green. (MT)

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Bowling Green ripped three home runs and collected 16 hits in picking up its first win of the season with a 14-12 decision over Middle Tennessee at windy Reese Smith Field. The Blue Raiders made a furious rally, however, by plating eight runs over the final three innings of an offensive affair.

In the bottom of the ninth inning, the Blue Raiders had the bases loaded following a single by **Ben Darlington** and pinch-hitter **Grant Box** at the plate. With one out, Darlington got picked off at first base and Box promptly hit the next pitch out of the park to left field. It was Box's first career hit and should have been a Grand Slam. Matt Ray ended the threat by flying out to center.

Tyler Copeland (0-1) took the mound for the Blue Raiders but gave up six runs and seven hits before being relieved in the fourth by Tyler Hyde. Hyde did not fair much better as he lasted just 1.2 innings after allowing four runs and three walks. The Blue Raiders also used Matt Yurus, **Brandon Brokaw**, and Justin Tidwell on the hill.

"They simply pounded our starter and bullpen," head coach Steve Peterson said. "We got after their bullpen but it was just too late. Tyler was not on top of his game today at all."

Rawley Bishop and **Adam Warren**, who both collected three hits and three RBI, led the Blue Raiders at the plate. Two of Bishop's hits were home runs.

The Falcons (1-1) got on the board quickly as leadoff hitter Kurt Walls sent one over the left centerfield fence to give the visitors a 1-0 lead. Walls finished 4-for-5 at the plate with three doubles and four RBI.

The Blue Raiders (3-4) answered in their half of the first when first baseman **Rawley Bishop** hit his first of two long balls to tie the score. Bishop's two-out bomb went out over straight away center.

After a scoreless second, Bowling Green opened things up in the third with three runs against Copeland. Walls started things off with a double, and then moved to third when Marty Baird beat out an infield hit. Jeff Telmanik brought Walls in with a sacrifice fly to right field before Josh Dietz connected on a two-run blast to put the Falcons on top 4-1.

Bishop struck again in the third with his second home run of the game in as many at bats. Like in the first inning, Bishop came through with two outs but this time he went opposite field to right.

The Falcon bats stayed hot over the next three innings with eight more runs on eight hits to extend the lead to 12-2. Shortstop Ryan Oshay highlighted the stretch with a two-run blast in the fifth inning following a single by Dietz.

After Falcon pitching retired seven straight, Middle Tennessee got back into the scoring column in the sixth with two runs. Warren started the inning with a single, then advanced two bases to third on a throwing error by winning pitcher Nick Cantrell (1-0). Warren

scored on Blake McDade's triple and McDade later came home on a sacrifice fly by **Justin Jones**.

Yurus held the Falcons scoreless in the seventh to setup a big inning for the Blue Raiders.

Following back-to-back walks to **Dillon Heath** and Matt Ray, second baseman **Wayne Kendrick** put the Blue Raiders back in the game with a three-run blast to right centerfield. The Blue Raiders scored once more in the inning when Warren came home on a sharp single to left by Jones to make the score 12-8 at the end of seven.

The Blue Raiders added another run in the eighth when Kendrick scored on a double by Bishop.

Bowling Green dashed any hopes of a comeback by adding two more runs in the top half of the ninth inning. Walls, the star of the game, hit his third double of the afternoon to bring in both runs.

The two teams conclude the three-game series Sunday at 1 p.m. at Reese Smith Field.

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