Blue Raiders Bounce Belmont and Ball State

Sweep second day of home tourney

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee softball (5-9) put together a strong hitting performance on Saturday to sweep both games in the second day of the Middle Tennessee Strikeout Breast Cancer Classic at Blue Raider Field. The Blue Raiders defeated Belmont (2-6) 8-6 and Ball State (3-6) 7-2.

Freshman lefty hurler Lindsey Vander Lugt picked up wins in both games, entering the game with Belmont in relief and tossing a complete game against Ball State. With the two victories, the Olympia, Wash. native improves to 3-6 on the season.

Junior pitcher Amy Candioto started the first game of the day against Belmont, earning her second start of the season. She went 2.2 innings allowing one run on five hits. Vander Lugt replaced Candioto in the third and Sam Floyd also saw action before Vander Lugt returned to the game in the sixth inning.

It was Vander Lugt's return that stopped a Belmont rally in the sixth inning. Down 5-4, the Bruins put together two runs in the sixth to take the lead. Vander Lugt forced a ground out to end the Bruin threat.

Heading into the top of the seventh, Middle Tennessee was the away team in the first day of the tournament; the Blue Raiders faced a one-run deficit trailing 6-5. That would all change when Shelby Stiner strolled to the plate to start the seventh. The Peoria, Arizona native has been struggling at the plate of late, looking for a way to recapture the offensive prowess she enjoyed in 2006. She got a

good start to returning to it when she hit a rocket over the left field wall tying the game at six. It was her first homerun of the season. Caitlin McLure followed with a single and after a sacrifice by Justine Cerda and a ground out by Whitney Darlington; she scored off an RBI single by Muriel Ledbetter to get the insurance run.

Vander Lugt forced a three up and three down in the bottom of the seventh inning to close out the game.

Middle Tennessee opened the game the way it would finish, with the long ball. With one out, Cerda hit a double in the first inning. She would score thanks to a homerun by Darlington, her third of the season.

Belmont cut the lead in half in the second inning picking up one run. Sarah Vaughn hit an RBI double to score Meghan Pipkin.

In the second inning Katie Mielke hit a one out double and then stole third to put her self in scoring position with one out. Senior Melissa Weiland hit a sacrifice fly to score Mielke.

The Blue Raiders added two more runs in the top of the third inning. With two outs, Darlington hit a single and then stole second and third. Ledbetter then drew a walk and stole second. Junior Ashley Cline hit a two RBI triple scoring Darlington and Ledbetter; it was her first three-bagger of the season.

Belmont posted three runs in the bottom of the fourth inning and then added the two runs in the sixth to take the short-lived lead.

Darlington and Stiner were the only Blue Raiders two have multiple hits in the game. Cline and Darlington also had two RBI in the game.

Vander Lugt got her 10th start in 14 games as the Blue Raiders closed out day two of the Middle Tennessee Strikeout Classic against Ball State. She pitched her fifth complete game of the season going seven innings allowing two runs on five hits and striking out four. Vander Lugt had a no-hitter for three innings.

Middle Tennessee unleashed on the Cardinals to start the game. In the bottom of the first inning the Blue Raiders posted four runs right out of the gate. It all started with a Ball State error, which allowed Cerda to reach first. Cardinal pitcher Laura Masch hit both Darlington and Ledbetter to load the bases and Martha Davis capitalized with a two RBI single, scoring Cerda and Darlington. Mielke's single scored Ledbetter and Davis.

Back-to-back homeruns were the highlight of the third inning. Ledbetter pounded her third homerun of the season and Cline notched her first. Stiner hit her second leadoff homerun of the day in the fourth inning.

Ball State got on the board in the fifth inning. Brittany Jones scored off a ground out by Kelli Jeziorski. The Cardinals scored its second run in the top of the seventh inning, thanks to an RBI double by Kamilah Holle.

For the second straight game, Stiner notched a multiple hit performance, going 2-for-3. Stiner also

picked up her fifth stolen base of the season. Mielke also had two hits against Ball State

Middle Tennessee went 2-2 in the first two days of action at the tournament. The Blue Raiders will play in the consolation bracket against Ball State at 11 a.m. Sunday. Tennessee State and Morehead State will face off at 1:30 p.m. in the championship bracket.

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