Baseball Falls at Lipscomb, 3-1

Squad manages just five hits in loss

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. - Rob Smithson struck out seven in a complete game effort and Justin Sanders hit a two-run homer in the fourth inning for all of the offense Smithson would need, as Lipscomb defeated Middle Tennessee, 3-1, Wednesday afternoon at Dugan Field. Middle Tennessee (3-6) lost for the third straight time this season and managed just five hits against Smithson (2-0), who walked only two batters. The Blue Raiders stranded only six runners in the game, with just three in scoring position. Smithson has allowed just one run now in 21.0 innings this season. Blue Raider starter Brett Smalley (0-2) allowed two runs on nine hits in 5.2 innings of work to get the loss, his second by the same score after Middle Tennessee lost at Samford, 3-1, last Wednesday. Adam Warren had two of Middle Tennessee's five hits in the game and stole two bases. Caleb Joseph and Sanders both had two hits for Lipscomb, who won its fourth game in a row. Lipscomb looked to get on the board in the first after a one-out single from Allen Bolden. Joseph then doubled into the gap in rightcenter and Bolden tried to score from first on the play, but Blake McDade cut the ball off before it reached the wall and made a good throw to Wayne Kendrick, who threw a rope to Drew Robertson at the plate to get the runner without much of a play. Middle Tennessee scored the first run of the contest in the second after a leadoff walk to Rawley Bishop. Myles Ervin then doubled into the gap in leftcenter with one out, easily plating Bishop for a 1-0 Blue Raiders lead. Lipscomb threatened in four of the first five innings against Smalley, stranding a pair of runners in the second and finally pushing a pair of runs across in the fourth. Shane Simpkins singled to leadoff and two batters later, Sanders lifted a fly ball just over the

wall in rightfield for his first home run of the season, giving the Bisons a 2-1 lead. Clay Lehning led off the Lipscomb fifth with a double, starting bullpen action for the Blue Raiders, but Robertson threw behind the runner, picking off Lehning to get out of the jam. Robertson reached on an error to start the eighth inning for Middle Tennessee, but Kendrick was unable to get the bunt down and struck out. Matt Ray grounded out and Warren flied out to end the inning with the Blue Raiders still trailing, 2-1. In the bottom of the eighth, Joseph led off with a single and moved to second on a passed by off the glove of new catcher Grant Box. After a popout, Ray booted a grounder off the bat of Ryan Wilkins, putting runners on the corners. Pinch-hitter Kevin Gavigan flied out to right, but Joseph did not test the arm of McDade in rightfield. Brandon Cadavid bailed out the Bisons with a two-out single to rightcenter, scoring Joseph for an insurance run and a 3-1 lead for Lipscomb. Bishop flew out to deep leftcenter to leadoff the ninth for the Blue Raiders and McDade walked, but Box struck out and Matt Campbell bounced out to end the contest. Middle Tennessee heads to Springfield, Mo., this weekend for a three-game series against Missouri State starting Friday at 3 p.m. at Hammons Field.

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