Blue Raiders Go Down to Wire with #21 Georgia Tech

Fall 8-6 in seventh

March 4, 2007 ·

WOODSTOCK, Ga. - Middle Tennessee softball (9-12) went down to the wire with No. 21 Georgia Tech in the semi-finals of the Silver Bracket at the Buzz Classic Sunday, but a two RBI homerun by the Yellow Jacket's Whitney Haller secured the win for the Ramblin Wreck. Earlier in the day, the Blue Raiders defeated Morehead State (6-7) 5-0 to advance to the semifinals.

It was a back-and-forth game until the bitter end. In the top of the seventh, the Blue Raiders looked to have something going when junior Whitney Darlington led off with a single. Her apparent steal was erased when she was called out for leaving early and a ground out by Shelby Stiner and a fly out by Sam Floyd ended the inning for Middle Tennessee.

Georgia Tech didn't waste any time in its half of the seventh. The sting of the Yellow Jackets was felt when Jennifer Yee led off with a triple and then she scored when Haller hit the homerun to end the game.

Middle Tennessee had Georgia Tech on its heels early in the game when the Blue Raiders jumped out to an early 1-0 lead. Ashley Cline led off with a bunt single and moved to second thanks to a sacrifice bunt by Justine Cerda. With one out, Cline stole third and then took advantage of a wild pitch by Georgia Tech pitcher Tiffany Johnson to come home.

Georgia Tech took its first lead of the game when it scored two runs in the bottom of the second inning. Middle Tennessee tied the game at two in the third inning when Martha Davis hit a sacrifice fly to right field to score Cline who was at third, after reaching on her second hit of the game.

A lead off double by Kristine Reed set up the Blue Raiders to recapture the lead in the fourth inning.

After Cline drew a walk, Reed advanced to third on a wild pitch and then scored of a sacrifice fly by Cerda.

The second tie of the game came in the bottom of the fourth when Georgia Tech's Savannah Brown hit a leadoff homerun to knot the game at three.

Middle Tennessee would enjoy its biggest lead of the game when it scored two runs in the top of the fifth inning to lead 5-3. Martha Davis led off with a single and advanced to second on the throw. Whitney Darlington hit a double and Davis scored off an error by Georgia Tech. Stiner came to the plate and hit her fifth double of the season all the way to the right field wall and that allowed Darlington to score.

The lead was short-lived as Georgia Tech roared back with three runs in the bottom of the fifth to again take the lead at 6-3. Middle Tennessee would prove it had fight left in the top of the sixth inning. Cline reached first after being hit by a pitch and stole her 13th base of the season, moving to second. Cerda's second sacrifice of the game moved Cline to third and she scored off an RBI ground out by Katie Mielke.

Freshman hurler Lindsey Vander Lugt tossed her second complete game of the day, taking the loss against Georgia Tech. She allowed 10 hits, seven earned runs and struck out five. Though the lefty hurler fell to 6-8 on the season, her most impressive days are yet to come and she showed her true dominance in the earlier game picking up her sixth win of the season and third shutout with the 5-0 win over Morehead State.

It wasn't spoke of, but everyone was holding their breath for Vander Lugt as she retired 17 consecutive batters before allowing a hit. Vander Lugt had a perfect game going into the sixth inning before a shot by the Eagles Ashley Archer bounced off Vander Lugt's leg and allowed Archer to get the hit. Vander Lugt ended the game with one hit and struck out six.

It took five innings before Middle Tennessee could string together some productive offense and push some runs across. The Blue Raiders had two runs in the top of the sixth inning to break the scoreless tie. Davis led of the inning with a single and with one out, Stiner hit a rope to the outfield to reach first and send Davis to third. Stiner then stole second and both scored off a two RBI single by Floyd.

The Blue Raiders added three runs in the top of the seventh inning. Reed reached first off a Morehead error and moved to second on a single by pinch hitter Melissa Weiland. Reed and Weiland moved to second and third off a ground out by Cerda and Reed scored on a sacrifice RBI by Mielke. Davis' RBI double scored Weiland and Davis scored off an RBI single by Darlington.

Middle Tennessee enters Sun Belt Conference play on Wednesday when the club matches up with No. 13 Louisiana-Lafayette in Lafayette, La. The first game of the double header is scheduled for 2 p.m.

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