Blue Raiders Victorious in Extra Innings

Weiland hits walk-off homerun

March 11, 2007 · David Powell

MURFREESBORO, TENN. - Melissa Weiland provided the late game heroics as the Middle Tennessee Blue Raiders (13-14, 4-2 Sun Belt) clinched their second consecutive series as they defeated the Troy Trojans (16-7, 1-2 Sun Belt) in extra innings at Blue Raider Field on Sunday. Troy took a one run lead in the top of the 4th inning only for Middle Tennessee to come storming back with two runs in the bottom of the 6th inning. The Trojans immediately responded with two of their own in the seventh before the Blue Raiders scored one run in their half of the 7th to force extra innings. Weiland's solo shot in the 9th won the game for MT, 4-3. Lindsey Vander Lugt (9-9), made her second consecutive start, pitching nine innings for her second straight complete game and allowed three runs and ten hits while walking one and striking out two. Angela Lopez (5-3) took the loss for the Trojans, allowing sevens runs and two hits, including the game winning homerun, over three innings while striking out two. Weiland, Muriel Ledbetter and Shelby Stiner each had two hits to lead MT. Caitlin McClure led off the game for the Blue Raiders with a groundout to third base before Justine Cerda hit a high fly ball that looked destined for the parking lot beyond the fence in left field before the ball fell into the waiting glove of Heidi Johnson for the second out. Katie Mielke struck out swinging on appeal to the first base umpire to end the inning. Vander Lugt and Troy starter Rocky Paige allowed for a combined one hit over the next two innings to leave the game knotted at zero. Troy took the lead in the top of the fourth when Brooke Powell hit a two-out single to center field driving in Stacey Dwyer. Felicia Hammer flied out to right field to end the inning. The Blue Raiders finally got a hit in the bottom of the inning when Muriel Ledbetter doubled down the right field line after strikeouts from Cerda and Katie Mielke. Ashley Cline popped out to second base to end the inning. The Trojans looked set to take the lead when Rocky Paige hit a deep fly ball into

the gap in left field, but out of nowhere centerfielder Martha Davis made an acrobatic, diving catch for the second out that preserved the one run deficit for the Blue Raiders. Middle Tennessee tied the game in the sixth inning with a little help from Troy shortstop Courtney Davis. Corrie Abel looked to have ground out to the shortstop for the first out of the inning, but the first basemen was pulled off the bag on Davis's throw as Abel reached the base. Cerda hit a sacrifice bunt to advance Abel to second before Mielke hit a single off of new Troy pitcher Michelle Grinage, driving in Abel to tie the game at one run apiece. Despite having three more hits in the inning, the Blue Raiders were unable to score another run. Troy wrestled the lead back in the top of the 7th inning. Powell led off the inning with a groundout to the shortstop before Hammer doubled down the left field line. Ragans walked to put a runner in scoring position and Paige singled to the shortstop to load the bases. Coteat bunted straight to Cerda who threw it to home for a force out and the first of the inning. Johnson singled to center field driving in what should have been three runs if not for yet another fine defensive play from Blue Raider Martha Davis. After two runs had scored, Davis had the ball in deep centerfield with a runner rounding third base. She made a strong throw to the catcher who tagged out pinch runner Kim Kelley to end the inning and limit Troy to a one run lead, 3-2. Middle Tennessee tied the ball game in the bottom of the 7th inning. Hero Melissa Weiland hit a single up the middle before Whitney Darlington popped a bunt over the head of the on rushing third baseman for a single, advancing Weiland to second base. Abel hit a hard shot down the left field line for a double, scoring Weiland and tying the game at three runs. Middle Tennessee dramatically forced extra innings in the deciding contest of the three game series, but the drama wasn't finished yet. After a scoreless 8th inning, Troy's Angie Coteat grounded out to third base to send the game into the bottom of the inning. After Shelby Stiner flied out to left field for the first out, Weiland stepped up to bat looking to turn her season around. She did just that, driving a pitch ack over the pitcher and beyond the center field wall to give the Blue Raiders a dramatic 4-3 victory. The Blue Raiders look for their third straight series victory when they take on Jacksonville State at Blue Raider Field on Wednesday, March 14 at 2 PM.

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