

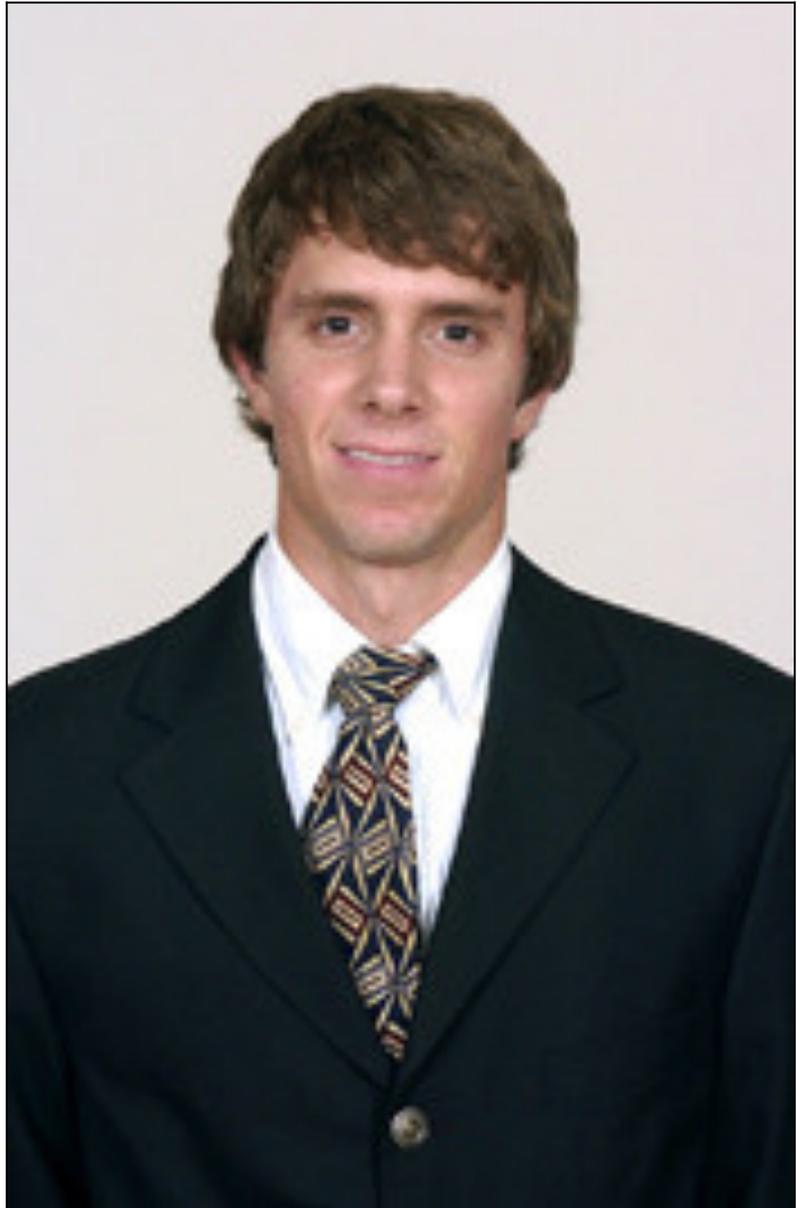
Blue Raiders drop 10-4 decision to Southern Illinois

Ervin delivers first career home run, three-hit performance in setback

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Middle Tennessee committed a season-high five errors, leading to four unearned runs, as the Blue Raiders suffered a 10-4 setback to visiting Southern Illinois in the first of a two-game set at Reese Smith Field. One of the few bright spots for the Blue Raiders was the play of freshman shortstop Myles Ervin who was forced into play for an injured Matt Ray. Ervin provided the second three-hit game of his career, going 3-for-5 with his first career home run and two RBI. Rawley Bishop (2-for-4), Zach Barrett (2-for-4), and Grant Box (2-for-4) also had multi-hit games to lead an 11-hit attack; however, faulty fielding and inconsistent pitching hampered Middle Tennessee (7-10). After Southern Illinois (12-5) went ahead 3-0 after the first three innings, Middle Tennessee came to life in the bottom of the fourth. The prospect of a rally appeared to diminish



when Wayne Kendrick's line drive was snagged at third base and now Box, who collected a one-out hit, was still at second with two out. Ervin came through with some two-out magic; however, when he drilled a two-run blast. The Blue Raiders would add an unearned run to even the slate, 3-3, before the profitable inning ended. That lead was short-lived, though as Southern Illinois cashed in with seven runs combined in the sixth through eighth innings, getting two in the sixth, two in the seventh,

and adding three insurance runs in the eighth. Middle Tennessee managed just three hits and no runs in 3-1/3 innings off Saluki relief pitcher Ian Reinhart. The Blue Raiders hurt themselves with an inability to deliver at the plate in the early innings, leaving seven on in the first three innings and 13 for the game. Brett Smalley (1-3) was saddled with the loss. The teams will conclude the series Wednesday at 3 p.m., at Reese Smith Field.

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