Ragin' Cajuns take first game of series

Scott suffers tough-luck loss

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - If pitching is what you enjoy most about baseball then Reese Smith Field was the place to be when Middle Tennessee opened the first game of a three-game Sun Belt series against Louisiana-Lafayette Friday night. The anticipated pitcher's duel between Ragin' Cajun right-hander Buddy Glass and Blue Raider junior Matt Scott materialized, and on a night when a fierce wind was blowing directly in from straight-away centerfield one would figure runs would be at a premium. And they were as Louisiana-Lafayette (15-3, 4-0) scored three runs in the first three innings and went on to a 6-3 win against Middle Tennessee (8-11, 2-2) in front of 616 on a cold, blustery night at Reese Smith Field. Matt Campbell and Myles Ervin were each 2-for-3 and were the only Blue Raiders with multi-hit games. Campbell also scored two runs. Both starting pitchers threw well; however, Glass didn't factor in the decision and Scott (1-2) was saddled with the tough-luck loss after pitching eight strong innings, scattering 10 hits, and allowing four runs, three earned. With the aces of their respective teams dueling on the mound small ball would routinely be the order of the night, and it was for the most part; however, hitting in the clutch was also the order of the evening for the Blue Raiders. Louisiana-Lafayette struck first with two runs in the first, including one unearned, and then went on top 3-0 on Jonathan Lucroy's solo home run to left center in the third. That's when the Blue Raiders started chipping away. Middle Tennessee manufactured its first three runs and picked up a pair of two-out hits in the process. Matt Campbell's one-out double in the third led to the Blue Raiders' first run when Myles Ervin came up with a two-out single to left. Middle Tennessee continued sterling execution in the fourth when Wayne Kendrick led off the inning with a single, stole second and when to third when Rawley Bishop drilled a line drive up the middle and off Glass' foot. The ball ricocheted directly to the first baseman for the second out. Adam Warren's ground out to second plated Kendrick to narrow the gap to 3-2 after four innings. The Ragin' Cajuns came up with

a two-out, run-producing single in the top of the fifth, but the Blue Raiders continued the trend in the bottom of the frame when Kendrick's two-out single to right scored Campbell, who had started the inning with a single. The inning also proved to be the end of the night for Glass, who gave way to Matt Pilgreen after surrendering a one-out hit to Ervin in the fifth. Pilgreen was outstanding in relief, though, as he slammed the door on the Blue Raiders with 3-2/3 innings of two-hit work, striking out two, and walking none to earn his second win in five relief appearances. Danny Farquhar came on to pitch the ninth and notch his fifth save. The Ragin' Cajuns picked up two huge insurance runs in the top of the ninth when pinch-hitter Devery Van De Keere nailed a two-run home run to right center of relief pitcher Jordan Alvis to stretch the advantage to 6-3. The teams will play the second game of the series Saturday at 4 p.m. Brad Robinson will get the start for the Blue Raiders, and John Zorich will toe the mound for the Ragin' Cajuns.

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