

March 25, 2007

Baseball Wins in 14 Innings, 7-5

Blue Raiders win third straight series to start conference play

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JONESBORO, Ark. - [Matt Campbell](#)'s fielder's choice and [Wayne Kendrick](#)'s single both scored runs and Travis Mathews tossed 1.1 scoreless innings to pick up his first victory, as Middle Tennessee outlasted Arkansas State, 7-5, in 14 innings Sunday at Tomlinson Stadium. The Blue Raiders won their third straight series to start Sun Belt play and won a series in Jonesboro for the fourth straight time.



Freshman Blake McDade slides in safely ahead of the throw to Drew Rogers in the sixth inning in Middle Tennessee's 7-5, 14-inning victory over Arkansas State Sunday. (Hannah Dolle) [f](#)

It was the longest game for Middle Tennessee since playing 14 innings on March 20, 2005, at Missouri State. The Blue Raiders did not manage a hit from the 10th until the 14th inning when [Doug Birkofer](#) led off with an infield single and Matt Ray followed with a bunt single, putting runners on the corners.

[Myles Ervin](#) was walked with one out to load the bases before Campbell's RBI groundout, and Kendrick followed with a run-scoring single to right, his first hit of the game in seven at-bats.

Mathews (1-0) got the final out of the 13th inning, coming in the game with two runners on base and getting a line out to end the inning. Mathews got the first two outs of the 14th before hitting a batter and then getting a groundout to end the contest.

The two teams combined for 31 hits but stranded 36 runners on base. Middle Tennessee had the bases loaded with no outs in the top of the ninth and did not push a run across, while ASU hit into inning-ending doubleplays in both the 11th and 12th innings.

Middle Tennessee starter [Brett Smalley](#) tossed a career-best seven innings, allowing five runs on 10 hits. The righthander walked one and struck out three. Smalley threw first-pitch strikes to 20 of the 31 batters he faced.

Reliever [Brett Reilley](#), who appeared in all three games in the series, tossed 2.2 scoreless innings and [Josh Anderson](#) also worked 2.2 scoreless frames before Mathews for the final four outs.

ASU starter Jett Jones worked 4.2 innings, giving up three runs on six hits, walking three and striking out one. Reliever Jacob Maggard allowed two unearned runs on four hits in 2.2 innings, striking out one.

ASU's Tim Egart was the workhorse for the home team, tossing five innings, coming into the game in the ninth with the bases loaded and working out of the jam. Egart did not allow a hit in five innings, striking out five.

Ryan Blackburn (0-1), the fifth ASU hurler of the contest, took the loss, giving up two runs on three hits in one inning.

[Adam Warren](#) collected three of Middle Tennessee's 15 hits in the contest, while Ervin, [Rawley Bishop](#) and Zach Barrett all had two hits in the victory.

Ryan Hudgins went 5-for-6 in the loss for ASU, driving in four of his team's five runs.

The Blue Raiders finally got on the board in the fourth. Barrett reached on a fielder's choice, stole second, moved to third on a groundout from [Taylor Dennis](#) and scored on a wild pitch.

ASU tied the contest in the bottom of the inning when Hudgins singled with two outs and Brandon Eller laced a triple that hit the chalk down the rightfield line, plating Hudgins.

Middle Tennessee scored twice in the fifth on three hits, starting with a leadoff single from Drew Robertson. Campbell walked with one out before a two-out single to left from Bishop plated Robertson and ended the day for Jones. Warren's infield single up the middle scored Campbell, giving the Blue Raiders a 3-1 lead.

The Raiders added two unearned runs in the sixth, starting when Blake McDade reached on an error by Hudgins at third base. A groundout moved McDade to second and he scored on a two-out single to right from Ervin. Campbell then hit a high, lazy fly ball to leftcenter that Jordan Kimball dropped, allowing Ervin to score all the way from first for a 5-1 Middle Tennessee advantage.

Arkansas State would battle back once again, just like the first two games of the series. Cody Pace beat out an infield single deep

in the hole and Tyler Doke followed with a single to right in the bottom of the sixth. With one out Hudgins hit a low line drive down the leftfield line that just cleared the wall, much like his home run on Friday, cutting the Blue Raider lead to 5-4.

ASU tied the game in the seventh with three consecutive two-out singles. Doke singled up the middle off the glove of Smalley, Josh Yates followed with a single to center and Hudgins blooped a soft single into short center, plating Doke tie the contest at five.

In the Blue Raider eighth, McDade led off with a single and moved to second on a sacrifice bunt from Robertson. Pinch-runner Ray went to third on a wild pitch and tried to score on Ervin's grounder to second, but Guy Brown's throw to the plate was in time to getting the sliding runner. Campbell then walked before Kendrick flied out to end the inning.

Brown and Drew Rogers both singled with one out in the ASU eighth and after a fielder's choice, A.J. Prickel walked to load the bases, but Reilley induced a groundout from Pace to end the inning.

Middle Tennessee missed a golden opportunity to take the lead in the ninth after leadoff singles from Bishop and Warren and a walk to Barrett. Egart came in to get out of the jam, striking out Dennis looking, getting Ray to pop out and striking out Robertson, ending the threat.

Doke led off the ASU ninth with a single before Yates ripped a ball to Kendrick at short. A slight bobble by Kendrick allowed Yates to be safe at first. Hudgins singled to center, his fourth consecutive hit, before Eller lined out to third and Brown's slow-roller to third was handled to Barrett to end the inning.

Kendrick struck out but reached on a wild pitch in the 10th before Bishop sent a live drive deep to leftcenter that Pace caught at the wall, a ball knocked down considerably by a gusting wind blowing straight toward home plate.

ASU had the best scoring chances until the final inning. In the 11th Hudgins singled with one out and Eller walked, but Brown hit into a 6-4-3 tailor-made twin-killing to end the inning.

In the 12th Rogers singled to leadoff and Prickel was intentionally walked after a sacrifice bunt. After Pace was hit to load the bases, Doke bounced into an inning-ending 6-4-3 doubleplay.

Middle Tennessee plays five of its next six games at home, starting Tuesday at 6 p.m. versus Austin Peay. The Blue Raiders go to Nashville on Wednesday to face top-ranked Vanderbilt before hosting Louisiana-Monroe next weekend at Reese Smith Field.

GAME NOTES

Redshirt freshman [Jubal Duncan](#) got his second start of the season and second in four games in rightfield ... Senior [Matt Campbell](#) singled in the first, extending his hitting streak to a career-best 11 games ... Freshman [Myles Ervin](#) extended hit hitting streak to three games with a single in the third .. Sophomore [Rawley Bishop](#) extended his career-best hitting streak to 14 games with a single in the fifth.

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