Baseball Wins Fourth Straight Series

Wayne Kendrick collects four hits, career-high four RBIs in victory

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Wayne Kendrick collected four hits and four RBIs and Middle Tennessee took advantage of seven walks, with six of the runners coming across to score, as the Blue Raiders won their fourth straight Sun Belt series with an 11-5 victory over Louisiana-Monroe on Sunday. Middle Tennessee has won 2-of-3 in all four conference series this season, never before done since joining the league seven years ago, and trails Louisiana-Monroe and Louisiana-Lafayette by one game, though the Sun Belt slate is less than half done. The Blue Raiders have won conference series with both first-place teams. Kendrick had his third four-hit game of the season, driving in a career-high four runs. Senior Justin Humphrey added two hits, including his first career home run, while Myles Ervin scored three times and Adam Warren twice. The Blue Raiders used the big inning to take control of the contest, scoring four times in both the third and fourth innings. The Warhawks came into the game giving up just under four walks per game, but wildness cost the visitors their first series loss of the year in Sun Belt play. Matt Ray and Ervin both walked and scored in the third, and Drew Robertson, Ray and Ervin all walked and came around to score in the fourth. Blue Raider starter Brett Smalley (2-3) worked five innings to get the victory, allowing five runs on eight hits. He walked three and struck out three. Jordan Alvis and Brett Reilley each tossed two innings to finish the contest, walking one and striking out three without giving up a run. ULM starter Jared Jennings lasted just 2.2 innings, giving up five runs on four hits with two walks. Reliever David Mixon allowed six runs on five hits in 4.1 innings, walking five. The Warhawks scored twice in the first to take an early lead, including a solo homer to right from Andy Jones, his second home run of the series. Bo Bowman walked and Dexter Fontenot executed the hit-and-run to perfection, singling through the right side to put runners on the corners. Kyle Suire's line drive to deep leftfield plated Bowman for a 2-0 ULM lead. The visitors added another run in the second on a leadoff solo homer to rightcenter from Travis Drader, his third of the weekend. Ben Soignier and Jones both had two-out singles, but

Bowman flied out to end the inning. Middle Tennessee got on the board with Justin Humphrey's towering drive in the bottom of the second that just cleared the wall in leftcenter, his first career home run. The Blue Raiders added four more runs in the third, chasing ULM starter Jennings. Ray and Ervin drew back-to-back walks to leadoff and Kendrick's sharp single through the leftside plated Ray just ahead of Fontenot's throw to the plate. Rawley Bishop then laced a double off the wall in leftcenter, scoring two runs, and Matt Campbell's sharp single off the glove of third baseman Drader and into left field plated Bishop for a 5-3 Middle Tennessee advantage. The home team added four more runs in the fourth, taking advantage of free passes once again. Robertson, Ray and Ervin all walked to leadoff, loading the bases for Warren, who singled to center, scoring two runs. Kendrick then doubled just inside the leftfield line, plating two more runs for a 9-3 Middle Tennessee lead. The Warhawks scored twice in the fifth to cut into the lead. Jones reached on a fielder's choice before Bowman doubled off the base of the centerfield wall. Suire's single to rightfield past a diving Bishop at first base scored both runners. The Raiders added an unearned run in the sixth, thanks to Mixon. Ervin legged out an infield single with one out and Kendrick collected his third hit of the contest with two outs, putting runners on the corners. Bishop worked the count full and the first baseman, Bowman, moved behind the runner, but Mixon made a pickoff attempt to no one, allowing Ervin to score for a 10-5 Middle Tennessee lead. ULM threatened to cut into the lead again in the seventh after a leadoff single from Jones, his third hit of the contest, and a one-out walk to Fontenot. But Suire's hot shot to the right side was gloved by Kendrick going to his left. The second baseman started a 4-6-3 inning-ending doubleplay, keeping the Blue Raiders ahead by five. Middle Tennessee added a run in the eighth when Warren walked, stole second on scored on Kendrick's fourth hit of the game. Ervin scored seven runs from the leadoff spot on Saturday and Sunday, while Warren had seven hits and eight runs scored in the three-game series. Kendrick added eight hits and six RBIs. Middle Tennessee hosts former OVC rival Tennessee Tech on Tuesday at 6 p.m. and visits the Golden Eagles on Wednesday at 7 p.m.

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