Campbell's Four Hits Lead 6-5 Victory

Senior ties career high with four hits, Travis Mathews gets win in first career start

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Matt Campbell collected four hits while Matt Ray had a two-run homer, as Middle Tennessee built an early lead and held off Tennessee Tech, 6-5, Tuesday night at Reese Smith Field in the first game of a home-and-home series between the former OVC rivals. Campbell tied his career-high with the four hits and Ray hit his third homer of the season, but it almost wasn't enough. Middle Tennessee (16-16) stranded 15 runners in the contest, including the bases loaded in the fourth and fifth innings and a pair of runners in the second, third, seventh and eighth innings. The Blue Raiders scored twice in the second inning on a solo home run from Rawley Bishop and a fielder's choice by Justin Humphrey. Middle Tennessee added three more runs in the fourth, including a two-run homer from Ray and an infield single by Campbell, and Campbell scored in the sixth on a wild pitch for a 6-2 Middle Tennessee lead. Tennessee Tech (16-11) scored twice in the seventh on a two-run double from Steve Soper and had runners on the corners with one out in the eighth before Thomas Nelson grounded sharply into an inning-ending doubleplay. The Golden Eagles also made a big mistake in the ninth, as Josh Goodwin led off with a soft single to center but was gunned down trying to stretch it to a double. With one out Josh New hit a solo homer to right to make it 6-5, and Stuart Meinhart's grounder up the middle was handled by Wayne Kendrick to end the game. Middle Tennessee's Travis Mathews (2-0) got the victory in his first career start, scattering nine hits but allowing just two runs. He walked two in five innings of work before Chad Coley tossed a scoreless sixth inning. But Coley ran into trouble in the seventh, giving up two straight walks to start the inning before Soper's double chased him from the game. Brett Reilley tossed the final three innings, giving up four hits and just one run, posting his second save of the season. TTU's Justin Fields (1-1) took the loss, giving up two runs on five hits in three innings,

walking one. Field was the first of four Tennessee Tech hurlers in the contest. Tennessee Tech manufactured a run in the second to take an early lead. Sean Reilly led off with a single, moved to second on a sacrifice bunt, third on a single to center from Ryan Wardlow and scored on a sacrifice fly to right from Brian Sprowl. But the Blue Raiders quickly tied the contest in the bottom of the inning with a leadoff homer to leftcenter from Bishop, his 10th of the season. Campbell followed with a single and Myles Ervin walked. Grant Box's fielder's choice put runners on the corners and Humphrey's ground ball plated Campbell for a 2-1 Middle Tennessee lead. The home team threatened to add to the lead in the third, loading the bases with a single from Adam Warren, a double down the leftfield line by Wayne Kendrick and an infield single from Bishop. But Campbell popped out on a check swing and Ervin bounced into an inning-ending doubleplay. TTU knotted the contest with a run in the fourth after a one-out walk to Reilly. Tate McMillan followed with a single before an RBI double off the wall in leftcenter from Wardlow. Mathews worked out of the jam, getting Sprowl to line out and Nelson to foul out. The Blue Raiders retook the lead for good with three runs in the bottom of the inning on four hits and left the bases loaded as well. Box singled to leadoff and after a Zach Hudson fielder's choice, Ray hit his third home run of the year over the wall in rightcenter. Warren then walked, Kendrick had his second straight double and Bishop walked to load the bases. Campbell's infield single plated Warren for a 5-2 Middle Tennessee advantage. In the sixth Campbell singled with one out, went to third on a hit-and-run single from Ervin and scored on a wild pitch. Tennessee Tech cut into the lead with two runs in the seventh, starting with leadoff walks to Nelson and Goodwin. Soper then doubled off the base of the centerfield wall, scoring both runners, and cutting the Middle Tennessee lead to 6-4. The Golden Eagles threatened again in the eighth, with Wardlow doubling down the leftfield line with one out and Sprowl singling, putting runners on the corners. But Nelson hit a bullet to third baseman Ervin, who started a 5-4-3 doubleplay to end the inning. Middle Tennessee and Tennessee Tech play again Wednesday at 6 p.m. in Cookeville. Blue Raider lefthander Josh Anderson (0-0, 4.15) will draw the start, just the second start of his career. **GAME NOTES**

Myles Ervin started his first career game at third base, the third position in which he has started this year (designated hitter and leftfield are the others) ... Travis Mathews made his first career start and fifth career appearance ... Rawley Bishop extended his hitting streak to 20 games with a solo homer in the second inning ... Wayne Kendrick extended his hitting streak to 10 games with a double in the third inning.

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