Robinson Strong in 6-1 Victory

Blue Raiders look for fifth straight series win on Sunday

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LITTLE ROCK, Ark. - Brad Robinson allowed just one run in seven-plus innings and the top four hitters in the lineup all collected two hits apiece in Middle Tennessee's 6-1 victory over Arkansas-Little Rock Saturday at Gary Hogan Field. With the victory the Blue Raiders will look to win their fifth consecutive Sun Belt series on Sunday. Robinson (4-0) worked 7.1 innings, tying his season-long outing, to get the victory, allowing six hits while striking out four and walking three. He was hit in the foot by a line drive in the third inning but got the out and worked out of a jam later in the inning. Robinson also got some defensive help to end a threat in the sixth. Middle Tennessee (18-17, 9-5 Sun Belt) scored three times on five hits in the first inning to stake Robinson to an early lead. The righthander made it stand up, running his mark to 4-0 in conference action in five starts. Matt Ray, Adam Warren, Wayne Kendrick and Rawley Bishop all recorded two hits each, while Warren scored twice. Kendrick and Bishop both scored a run and Ray, Kendrick and Bishop all had RBIs. UALR starter Ashur Tolliver got off to a rocky start, allowing three runs on five hits in the first, before settling down and retiring 10 of the next 11 batters. Tolliver (3-3) took the loss, giving up five runs on nine hits in 6.1 innings, striking out seven and walking three while throwing 126 pitches. Middle Tennessee will look for its fifth straight conference series victory on Sunday. The Blue Raiders have won the previous four series with rubber game triumphs on Sunday and will send sophomore Brett Smalley (2-3, 4.54) to the mound at 1 p.m. in search of the victory. The Blue Raiders scored three times in the first inning on five hits and left the bases loaded as well. Ray led off the game with a single but was thrown out trying to steal. Warren followed with a single, stole

second and scored on Kendrick's slicing double down the rightfield line. Bishop followed with a double high off the wall in leftfield, a ball knocked down greatly by the wind blowing from the leftfield line to the rightfield line. Kendrick scored on the play and after a strikeout, Myles Ervin walked before Zach Barrett's RBI single to center and a 3-0 Middle Tennessee lead. Grant Box walked to load the bases, but Drew Robertson struck out to end the inning after 21 minutes and 47 pitches from Tolliver. In the UALR third inning, Nick DeSanctis hit a line drive off the right foot of Robinson, who still scrambled around to get the out. But the righthander struggled for several batters, throwing four straight balls to nine-hole hitter Brad Swiderski before an infield single by Ryan Gotcher and a single through the leftside from Brett Lawler on a 2-0 pitch. But Robinson, as usual, worked himself out of the jam, getting Brian Asbill to line out softly to first base and Robert Taylor to line out sharply to leftfield to end the threat with the Blue Raiders still holding a 3-0 advantage. Middle Tennessee scored twice more in the fifth on three hits after a leadoff single from Warren and a single to short center by Kendrick to put runners on the corners. After a popout, Matt Campbell struck out on a ball in the dirt, but Warren scored on the play when catcher Lawler had trouble gathering the ball and Campbell reached safely on the play. On the next pitch someone, either Kendrick or Ervin, missed a squeeze sign. Kendrick stayed in the rundown long enough for Campbell to reach third before being tagged out. Ervin then reached on an infield single up the middle, plating Campbell for a 5-0 Blue Raider lead. Robinson received some defensive help to get out of a jam in the sixth. Asbill walked with one out and Taylor followed with a single through the leftside. Robinson tried to pickoff Asbill at second, but his throw sailed into centerfield, allowing both runners to advance. Nathan Parker then popped down the rightfield line where Kendrick made the catch just in fair territory, then fired to the plate to nail Asbury trying to score, keeping the shutout in tact for Middle Tennessee. The Blue Raiders added an unearned run in the eighth after Barrett reached on a fielding error to leadoff. He moved to second on a sacrifice and scored on a two-out double down the leftfield line from Ray for a 6-0 Middle Tennessee advantage. The Trojans got a run in the eighth when Lawler singled with one out and Asbill walked, ending the day for Robinson. Taylor then singled against Blue Raider reliever Jordan Alvis before Parker drove home the run with a sacrifice fly to left. Alvis got the final five outs of the game for Middle Tennessee, giving up one hit.

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