

Ray's Double Gives Raiders 5-4 Victory

Freshman Tyler Hyde comes in to get the save

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CLARKSVILLE, Tenn. - Matt Ray's RBI double in the 10th inning scored Drew Robertson from first base and freshman Tyler Hyde got the final three outs, including a game-ending doubleplay, for his first career save, as Middle Tennessee outlasted Austin Peay, 5-4, in 10 innings Tuesday night at Raymond C. Hand Park. The Blue Raiders (20-17) stranded 16 runners in the contest, including two runners in six different innings. The Govs (17-14) took advantage and tied the game at four in the bottom of the ninth and had a chance to tie the contest again in the 10th. Robertson led off the Middle Tennessee 10th inning with a single and scored all the way from first on Ray's double to rightcenter. The Blue Raiders loaded the bases later in the inning, but Jubal Duncan bounced into an inning-ending doubleplay.



Tyler Copeland, the third of four Middle Tennessee hurlers, hit Tyler Bullock to start the bottom of the inning before J.B. Gilbert's sacrifice attempt turned into an infield single. Hyde entered the game and struck out pinch-hitter Ryan Gilboay after Gilboay failed to get the bunt down. The 1-2 pitch to Levi Cheshire was in the dirt, allowing Bullock to move to third, but Cheshire bounced the full count pitch to Wayne Kendrick at second, who started a game-ending 4-6-3 twin killing, preserving the Blue Raiders third consecutive victory. Copeland (3-2) picked up the victory, giving up one run on four hits with two strikeouts in two-plus innings. Ben Wilshire (0-3), the fifth Austin Peay hurler in the game, took the loss, allowing one run on three hits in two innings of work. Ray and Doug Birkofer both collected three hits for Middle Tennessee, who pounded out 16 hits in the contest. Middle Tennessee starter Josh Anderson worked five innings, giving up two earned runs and seven hits. Nick Marrs gave up one hit in two innings, working out of jams in both frames. Austin Peay starter Michael Dunn lasted just 3.1 innings, allowing three earned runs on eight hits with three strikeouts. Reliever David

Vicini tossed 2.2 scoreless frames, giving up two hits. The Blue Raiders scored once in the first thanks to a pair of APSU errors. Ray reached on an error by shortstop Cheshire to start the game. Ray stole second, moved to third on a sacrifice bunt from Birkofer and scored on Kendrick's bouncer, which was also booted by third baseman Tyler Farrar. The Govs tied the contest in the bottom of the first after a leadoff double down the leftfield line from Cheshire. Josh Meeker's sacrifice bunt moved the runner to third and Cheshire scored on a wild pitch. Middle Tennessee retook the lead in the third with five hits. Birkofer singled to right with one out and scored on Kendrick's double just inside the third base bag. With two outs Matt Campbell lined to center, with the ball falling off the glove of a diving Rafael Hill. Myles Ervin followed with a single before Zach Barrett singled to center, plating Campbell for a 4-1 Blue Raider advantage. Middle Tennessee had a chance to add to the lead in the fourth, with Robertson singling to leadoff and Birkofer finding a hole through the rightside, putting runners on the corners and ending the day for Dunn. But Kendrick flied out to short center and Rawley Bishop bounced into a fielder's choice to end the threat. APSU cut into the lead in the fourth when Trey Lucas reached on a Ray error to start the inning. After a fielder's choice, Matt Smith executed the hit-and-run to perfection, singling to right to put runners on the corners with two outs. Gilbert then singled through the leftside, plating Farrar, but Anderson got Hill to popout and end the inning with the Blue Raiders holding on to a 4-2 lead. Again, Middle Tennessee had runners in scoring position with less than two outs in the fifth and was unable to score. Ervin singled with one out and Barrett grounded deep in the hole on the leftside. Cheshire made the play, but his throw to second was wide and rolled into rightfield, allowing the runners to move to second and third. But Vicini again worked out of trouble, striking out Justin Humphrey and getting Robertson to ground out to end the inning with the Blue Raiders clinging to the 4-2 edge. APSU scored once in the fifth and could have had more, but stranded the bases loaded. Meeker and Will Hogue both singled with one out before Lucas hit into a fielder's choice, with the Blue Raiders just missing a doubleplay on the relay to first. With runners on the corners, Anderson hit Jake Lane to load the bases with two outs, but Smith's nubber off the end of the bat was fielded by Kendrick at second to end the threat. Middle Tennessee stranded a pair of runners in every inning from the third to the sixth and loaded the bases in the eighth with singles from Ray and Birkofer and a walk to Kendrick. But Bishop bounced into an inning-ending 5-4-3 doubleplay. The Govs took advantage of the many missed opportunities by Middle Tennessee. APSU tied the game in the bottom of the ninth after singles from Cheshire and Meeker to lead off the inning. Hogue popped up the bunt attempt, but pinch-hitter Josh Kempf, hitting .195 entering the game, singled softly through the leftside, plating Cheshire with the tying run. Copeland worked out of the inning with a pair of strikeouts, but not before the two teams headed to extra innings. Middle Tennessee hosts New Orleans this weekend at Reese Smith Field starting Friday at 6 p.m. The Blue Raiders are tied for second in the Sun Belt heading into the weekend, sporting a 10-5 record, while the Privateers enter the series 7-5 overall in Sun Belt play, tied for fourth in the league, and 21-12 overall. Fans can listen to all three games this weekend on 88.3 WMTS or at GoBlueRaiders.com. On Sunday the Blue Raiders will have Autograph Day after the game.

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