

Raiders Power Past Vandy, 11-8

Ray and Kendrick both collect three hits in victory before season-high crowd of 1,879

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Matt Ray and Wayne Kendrick both collected three hits and scored three runs, Kendrick added four RBIs and Grant Box drove in the go-ahead run with a double in the eighth, as Middle Tennessee defeated top-ranked Vanderbilt, 11-8, Wednesday night at Reese Smith Field. The Blue Raiders (21-20) ended a three-game losing streak and sent the Commodores (32-8) to their third consecutive loss.

Kendrick homered in the first and doubled in both the third and fifth innings, driving in four runs. Ray singled in the third and fifth, scoring on Kendrick's



hits, and doubled home two insurance runs in the eighth, recording his fourth three-hit game in the last six contests. Shay Horseman (2-1), the fourth of five Middle Tennessee hurlers, picked up the win, tossing 1.2 innings and giving up just one hit. Brett Reilley worked the final two innings to pick up his third save of the year, giving up two hits and striking out two, including the final batter of the game, pinch-hitter Jonathan White. The contest had 21 hits and four ties. Both teams scored twice in the first before the Blue Raiders took the lead in the second with a run. Vanderbilt battled back each time Middle Tennessee took the lead until the Blue Raiders finally got the lead for good with a single run in the seventh. Ray walked to leadoff and moved to second on a sacrifice bunt from Doug Birkofer. Kendrick was intentionally walked and with two outs, Box lined a 2-2 off his shoetops into the leftfield corner for a double, scoring Ray for a 9-8 Middle Tennessee advantage. The Raiders added a pair of insurance runs in the eighth thanks to a throwing error by Commodores third baseman Pedro Alvarez, allowing Drew Robertson to reach with one out. Pinch-hitter Adam Warren singled through the leftside before Ray laced a double into leftcenter against Nick Christiani, scoring Robertson and pinch-runner Jubal Duncan for an 11-8 advantage. Cody Crowell (1-1), the second of five Vandy pitchers, took the loss, allowing a run on one hit in 2.1 innings. VU starter Ty Davis was roughed up for eight runs on eight hits in 4.1 innings. The Commodores scored twice in the first when Blue Raider starter Chad Coley had trouble finding the plate. David Macias led off with a walk on five pitches, moved to second on a wild pitch, third on Alex Feinberg's groundout and scored on a

two-run homer to leftcenter from Dominic de la Osa, his ninth of the season. The Blue Raiders answered with two runs of their own in the bottom of the first. Matt Campbell walked on four pitches before Kendrick hit a 2-2 pitch from Davis over the wall in leftcenter, Kendrick's third home run of the season and first since February 24 against Bowling Green. Middle Tennessee took a brief lead with a single run in the second after a leadoff triple off the base of the centerfield wall from Myles Ervin. Zach Barrett's line drive to leftfield plated Ervin for a 3-2 advantage. But the Commodores knotted the game in the third. Feinberg singled to leadoff and moved to second on a wild pitch. Dominic de la Osa struck out, but the ball was in the dirt and Feinberg scampered over to third on Robertson's throw to first. Shea Robin's line drive to center plated Feinberg for a 3-3 game. The Blue Raiders gained the lead again with two runs in the third. Ray singled to leadoff, stole second and scored on Kendrick's double down the rightfield line. Vandy leftfielder Matt Meingasner never saw a high fly ball down the leftfield line from Box with two outs. The ball fell for a double, allowing Kendrick to score for a 5-3 Middle Tennessee advantage. But again Vanderbilt answered, scoring twice in the fifth to tie the contest once again. Brian Harris was hit to leadoff and moved to second on a sacrifice bunt from Macias. Feinberg's single past a diving Ray at short plated Harris. A walk to de la Osa and a wild pitch put runners on second and third. Shea then doubled to rightcenter, just out of the reach of the diving Campbell. Feinberg scored easily but de la Osa went back to second to tag. He tried to score on the play but was thrown out at the plate on a good relay from Zach Hudson to Kendrick to Robertson. Middle Tennessee regained the lead for the third time in the contest with three runs in the bottom of the inning. Ray singled, stole second and scored on Kendrick's double to leftcenter. Rawley Bishop then laced a ball into rightcenter and it rolled all the way to the wall. Kendrick scored, Bishop had a triple and Davis exited the game. Box drove home the run with a sacrifice fly to right, giving the Blue Raiders an 8-5 lead. The Commodores again tied the game with three runs in the sixth. Meingasner singled to leadoff and Ryan Flaherty followed with a walk. Brad French's sac bunt moved to the runners to second and third before a Harris single to right plated Meingasner. With runners on the corners, Macias doubled off the base of the centerfield wall, scoring Flaherty. Feinberg then lined out to center, scoring Harris, but Macias was gunned down at third to end the inning with the game tied for the fourth time. Box was 2-for-3 with three RBIs, tying his career high, while Feinberg went 3-for-4 with two runs and two RBIs for Vanderbilt. Middle Tennessee begins a three-game series this weekend at South Alabama, beginning Friday at 6 p.m. at Stanky Field. Saturday's game is at 3 p.m. and will be broadcast on Comcast Cable Channel 27 in the Midstate.

NOTES

A note for all parents - the annual Family Day Fish Fry will be held Saturday, May 5, after the 3 p.m. contest against Florida Atlantic. Please let Bobby Hines know if you are planning to attend.

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