Baseball Posts 6-5 Victory, Wins Series

Blue Raiders win third straight game, win sixth Sun Belt series in seven tries

April 21, 2007 · MT Media Relations

MOBILE, Ala. - Matt Scott worked five innings in his return from injury and five Middle Tennessee relievers tossed the final four innings, preserving a 6-5 victory for the Blue Raiders over South Alabama Saturday at Stanky Field. Leadoff hitter Matt Ray was 2-for-3 with two runs scored and two RBIs, while Zach Barrett collected a pair of hits and drove in two runs as well. Grant Box and Matt Campbell each added two hits for Middle Tennessee (23-20, 12-8 Sun Belt), who won their sixth conference series in seven tries this season. Scott (3-4) missed his scheduled start last Friday against New Orleans, just the second missed start of his career. The righthander returned on Saturday, giving up four earned runs on seven hits in five innings. He walked three and struck out a season-high seven. Scott limited the Jaguars to just one run and three hits through three innings before giving up three runs in the fourth thanks to a hit batsman, catcher's interference and two hits. The game was tied at five heading into the top of the sixth when Middle Tennessee plated the go-ahead run on a Ray double down the leftfield line, scoring Drew Robertson from first for a 6-5 advantage. Five Blue Raider relievers preserved the victory for Scott. Chad Coley and Brett Smalley each tossed one inning before Middle Tennessee used three pitchers in the eighth - Nick Marrs, Tyler Copeland and Brett Reilley - each recording one out. Reilley got the final three outs for his fifth save of the year and third in the last three Blue Raider games. South Alabama (19-18, 5-10) had one base runner in the seventh, eighth and ninth, but could not push across the tying run. Pinch-runner Russell Harben was doubled off on a line drive to end the seventh, Ryne Jernigan was stranded after a leadoff single in the eighth and USA left a runner on in the ninth after David Doss was hit to start the inning. Doss had three of South Alabama's nine hits in the game, while Jernigan collected two hits and leadoff

hitter Clint Toomey drove in two more runs, his fourth and fifth RBIs of the series. Jaguar starter Joey Doan (3-4) took the loss, allowing four earned runs on eight hits in six innings of work. Doan walked two and struck out four. Stephen Boyd tossed three scoreless innings of relief for USA, giving up one hit, walking two and striking out one. "The bullpen won the ballgame. We weathered the storm and then we answered back and got ahead and the bullpen did the job," head coach Steve Peterson said. "We just decided we were going to mix-and-match, not leave anybody out there long, and if we could get Reilley in a position where he wouldn't have to throw a lot, that's what we were going to do. We got in that position where we had a one-run lead, and you know, he's the fireman. He's the guy and he keeps getting it done." Peterson said Scott did a good job after not really knowing if his senior was going to be available for the second straight week. "Matt Scott gave us five innings. I thought he started off really sharp, looked very confident. Then he got in the stretch, got his rhythm off and started pushing some off-speed pitches, but he battled through and that's the stuff we've talked about. We knew South Alabama would make runs at us. They're a team that knows how to win and this is a huge series for both of us." The Blue Raiders started fast with a run in the first and could have had more. Ray reached on an infield single to leadoff the game, extending his hitting streak to 12 games, and moved to third on Barrett's looping single to right. Wayne Kendrick's fielder's choice plated Ray for a 1-0 lead. With two outs Box fisted a single down the rightfield line and after battling through a nine pitch at-bat, Blake McDade was hit to load the bases. But Adam Warren grounded out to end the inning with just one run crossing the plate. The Jaguars tied the contest with a run in the third. Ray Kruml singled with one out, moved to second on a wild pitch, third on a single to left from Doss and scored on another wild pitch. But the Blue Raiders came right back with four runs in the fourth on three hits and one USA error. McDade walked to leadoff before Warren just beat the relay on a potential doubleplay. Campbell and Robertson both followed with singles, loading the bases. Ray then hit a hotshot at first baseman Jeff Cunningham, whose throw to second was dropped by Bucky Kateon, allowing one run to score. Barrett followed with a single through the hole on the rightside past a diving Cunningham, scoring two runs, and Kendrick's fielder's choice plated the final run for a 5-1 advantage. USA scored three times in the bottom of the inning to cut the Middle Tennessee lead back to one. Lance Heisler was hit to leadoff and Jernigan reached on catcher's interference. Kateon advanced both runners with a sacrifice bunt before a bad-hop single that bounced over Kendrick's head and into centerfield off the bat of Toomey scored two runs. A bunt from Kruml advanced Toomey to second and a two-out single to right from Doss scored the final run of the frame. The Jaguars tied the contest in the fifth after Sean Laird reached to leadoff on an infield squibber and Joel Collins doubled down the leftfield line. Jernigan's line out to left plated Laird, tying the game at five. Middle Tennessee retook the lead in the sixth. Campbell singled to leadoff and after a fielder's choice, Ray dropped a double just inside the leftfield line. Robertson never stopped coming around third, just beating the relay for a 6-5 Blue Raider edge. In the Jaguar seventh Laird drew a leadoff walk and Harben moved to second on a sacrifice bunt from Collins. Heisler then lined out sharply to Barrett at third and Harben was doubled off to end the inning. South Alabama threatened again in the eighth after Jernigan led off with a single against Marrs. After a sacrifice bunt from Kateon, Copeland came on to get a groundout by Toomey for the second out. Reilley then induced a popout from pinch-hitter Michael Cart to end the inning. Reilley worked out of trouble again in the ninth after hitting Doss to leadoff. Cunningham lined out to deep center before a fielder's choice by pinch-hitter Eric Shortell. Collins popped out to Ray to end the contest, just the eighth win in 25 tries all-time for Middle Tennessee in Mobile. The Blue Raiders will look for a series sweep on Sunday, sending lefthander Josh Anderson (1-1, 3.03 ERA) to the mound to face USA lefthander Brandon Sage (2-4, 6.57 ERA) at 1 p.m. Middle Tennessee returns home Wednesday to face Belmont at 6 p.m. at Reese Smith Field. **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.

Printed on June 19, 2013
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/25660