Blue Raiders Split Doubleheader with Lipscomb

Win first game 8-5; lose second 13-9

April 26, 2007 · David Powell

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - Whitney Darlington had a career day going a combined 5-for-7 with three home runs and eight RBI as the Middle Tennessee Blue Raiders (25-25, 10-6 SBC) split a non-conference doubleheader with regional foe Lipscomb Bison (25-25-1, 9-8-1 ASUN) at Draper Diamond in Nashville, Tenn. on Thursday. Middle Tennessee came into the game losers of two straight games after having their season-high four game winning streak snapped with a 4-3 loss to the Austin Peay Lady Govs last week. It was followed by a 5-4 loss Wednesday to the Tennessee State Tigers. The day was highlighted by the excellence of Junior Whitney Darlington whom continued show what makes her one of the favorites for the 2007 Sun Belt Conference newcomer-of-the-year award. Darlington now leads the team in batting average, hits, home runs, RBI, doubles, triples, slugging percentage, on-base percentage and total bases. She is second on the team in runs scored and stolen bases. The Bison opened the scoring in the first game with a two-run home run by Heather Collins, leaving the Blue Raiders with an early 2-0 deficit after the 1st inning. After responding in the next inning through a RBI single from Kristine Reed, Middle Tennessee took the a 3-2 lead through Darlington's first home run on the day. Lipscomb tied the game at three runs apiece in the third inning before Middle Tennessee hit back for four runs in the next inning to take a 7-3 lead. Ashley Cline hit a double for two RBI and Justine Cerda and Darlington provided the other runs for the Blue Raiders. It was all they would need en route to picking up an 8-5 victory, their 25th win on the season. Cline finished the day going 2-for-2 with three RBI and one run scored. She took her team-high stolen base count to 28 on the season. Blue Raider starter Samantha Floyd (6-6) picked up the win, giving up three earned runs on nine hits, while striking out one, in 6.0 innings of action. Christen Campbell got the loss for the bison, giving up seven earned runs on ten hits, while striking out seven and walking two, in the complete game effort. The Bison figured out in the second game that the only way to beat the Blue Raiders at

this point in the season is to keep it close until the final inning and hope for a little luck. That is exactly what happened. Middle Tennessee took a one-run lead into the top of the 7th inning only to see Lipscomb belt a dramatic walk-off, grand slam home run to win the game 13-9. MT starter Lindsey Vander Lugt (17-17) picked up the loss, giving up six earned runs on ten hits, while striking out two and walking two, over 3.2 innings. Samantha Floyd also pitched for the Blue Raiders, giving up two earned runs on four hits, while striking out three and wakling one, in 3.0 innings. Christen Campbell got the win for the Bison, giving up four earned runs on ten hits, while striking out two and walking two, over 5.1 innings in the long relief appearance. Middle Tennessee took a 1-0 lead in opening inning when Justine Cerda reached on an error, plating Corrie Abel. Lipscomb responded with four runs of their own in the bottom of the inning, highlighted by a Campbell two RBI double, to take a 4-1 lead. The Blue Raider arsenal sprang back into action in the very next inning through a Katie Mielke solo home run and a Darlington three RBI shot to take control of the scoreboard with a 5-4 advantage. After increasing their lead to two runs in the third inning through an Abel RBI single, the Bison responded through two runs of their own to tie the game 6-6. Middle Tennessee and Lipscomb would score two more runs apiece over the next three innings to knot the game 8-8 and set up another dramatic final inning for the Blue Raiders. They looked to have won the game when Caitlin McLure was driven across the plate by a Martha Davis single, but Davis was thrown out at second base for the second out of the inning. Shelby Stiner flied out to third base to end what could have been a high-scoring inning for MT. Lipscomb loaded the bases in their half of the inning before Campbell belted the walk-off shot to drop Middle Tennessee back to the .500 mark on the season. The Blue Raiders return to Sun Belt Conference play for their final home series of the regular season with a doubleheader on Saturday against Florida Atlantic. The first game is slated to begin at 1 p.m.

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