

# Blue Raiders Remain Undefeated in Postseason

## Will face Florida International-Florida Atlantic winner in SBC Tournament semifinals

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### **MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -**

Lindsey Vander Lugt got her second straight win and allowed just one earned run as the Middle Tennessee Blue Raiders (30-28) made it two straight postseason victories in the Sun Belt Conference Tournament, this time with a 6-2 win over the Florida International Golden Panthers (22-34) at MT Softball Complex on Thursday. The No.4 seed Blue Raiders defeated the No. 5 South Alabama Jaguars in the first-round of the tournament on Wednesday, 1-0, behind strong pitching from Vander Lugt. She threw a shutout with six strikeouts in the complete game. No. 8 seed Golden Panthers were coming off a first-round win in a 15-inning thriller over conference champions and No. 1 seed Florida Atlantic on Wednesday. MT starter Lindsey Vander Lugt (21-19) picked up the win, giving up one earned run on eight hits, while striking out three and walking none, in her second complete game in a row. Penny Eastman (13-14) got the start and the loss for FIU,



giving up three run on five hits, while striking out three and walking three, in 3.0 innings of



action. Kerri Houck pitched final 4.0 innings for the Golden Panthers, giving up three runs on three hits, while striking out one and walking none. Middle Tennessee came out hitting as Freshmen Corrie Abel led off the game with a triple to the gap in left-center field. They took a 1-0 lead when Caitlin McLure, making her second straight start of the postseason, blasted a RBI single down the left field line. Abel leads the team with a .346 batting average in 104 at-bats. Abel and McLure were again involved in a scoring play when the Blue Raiders added two more runs in the top of the 3rd inning to put them up 3-0. Both Abel and McLure scored on two straight wild pitches by Florida International starter Eastman. Middle Tennessee would threaten later in the inning, but Katie Mielke popped out to the shortstop with the bases loaded for the final out. Florida Atlantic got a run back in the 5th inning when pinch runner Suzy Ellquist off an error to cut the MT lead to 3-1. They again trimmed the lead to 3-2 off an Amanda Cox RBI single to third base. It looked like FIU had tied the game at three runs apiece but Kim Rodriguez was called out on batter interference to end the inning. The Blue Raiders added three more runs in the top of the 7th inning. Ashley Cline scored on an error before Whitney Darlington hit a RBI sacrifice bunt, scoring Abel. McLure came across the plate off a Martha Davis groundout to the shortstop to round out the scoring. McLure finished the game going 2-for-4 with two runs scored and one RBI. The undefeated Blue Raiders advance to the semifinals to face the winner of the Florida International-Florida Atlantic quarterfinal game. Friday's semifinal game is set for 5:30 p.m. at MT Softball Complex.

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