

# Lady Raiders Split SBC Series With FIU

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Middle Tennessee's softball team came back in the first game of a double header against FIU behind a homerun from Lindsay Azevedo and a game-winning RBI from Laura Brockman as the two teams split Saturday's games and the series. Middle Tennessee (35-20, 8-8 Sun Belt) took the first game by a score of 5-4, but lost game two to FIU (41-17, 11-4) by a count of 5-0 as the Panthers received a solid performance from starting pitcher Leah Barnes.

Azevedo's two-run homerun in the bottom of the sixth pulled the Lady Raiders back into a tie with FIU at four after the Panthers had taken a 4-2 lead.

After reaching on an error, Steffi Silva moved over to second on a sacrifice by Kip Phillips and scored the game-winning run when Brockman singled to right-center. "She has struggled at the plate this year," head coach Karen Green said of Brockman. "But we still have confidence in her ability, and we know she is capable. That's why we put her in those type of situations, because we know she is capable of coming through." The Golden Panthers out-hit the Lady Raiders 10 to 5, but FIU stranded 10 runners and committed three errors helping Middle Tennessee pull out their second straight in the series. Jennifer Martinez, who won for the first time in three starts, also led the Lady Raiders at the plate going 2-fo-2 in the game with an RBI. She improved to 15-12 on the rubber allowing 10 hits and three earned runs with six strikeouts. In game two, FIU was aided by six Middle Tennessee errors as the Panthers earned a split in the series. "We had way too many errors today," said Green. "It's very uncharacteristic of us. You can't dig yourself in a hole like that and then not hit or you won't be able to win." Leah Barnes went the distance for the Panthers shutting out the Lady Raiders allowing six hits striking out seven. It marked the third time in the last six games the Lady Raiders were shutout. Stacy Preator was dealt the loss as she struck out five in the contest. She allowed seven hits, however, only two of the five runs given up were earned off Preator. Phillips and Azevedo each had two singles to lead Middle Tennessee offensively. "We wanted at least a split," Green remarked. "And we got that, but we really wanted three out of four and that's really the only way to make a dent in the conference standings." The Lady Raiders complete the home schedule and will travel to Bowling Green, Ky. next weekend to face Western Kentucky in a four-game regular season ending series.

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