

May 19, 2007

Baseball Falls in Home Finale, 4-2

Squad manages just six hits, strands seven runners in defeat

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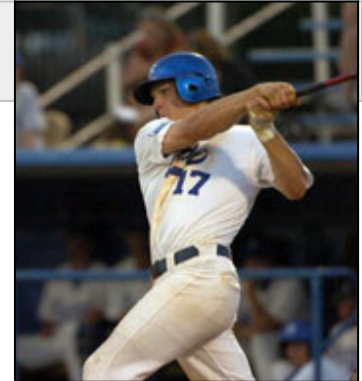
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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Three Western Kentucky hurlers allowed just six hits and the Hilltoppers scored runs in the first two innings and added a pair of insurance runs in the eighth, taking a 4-2 victory and a series win over Middle Tennessee Saturday at Reese Smith Field.

Middle Tennessee (29-26, 16-14 Sun Belt) stranded seven runners in the game, including the bases loaded in the sixth. Five of the seven runners left on base in the contest by the Blue Raiders were in scoring position.

Western Kentucky (25-28, 15-15) used good pitching to win the final two games of the series, limiting the Blue Raiders to just 10 hits and two runs. Colby Beach (4-3) worked four innings to pick up the victory, allowing one run on four hits. Ben Paxton worked in and out of trouble for three innings before Steve Hupper posted his fourth save of the year, working the final two innings.



Rawley Bishop hit his 16th home run of the season on Saturday, but it was too little too late in the 4-2 loss to Western Kentucky. (MT) 

Jordan Alvis (1-2) suffered the loss, giving up two runs on six innings in four innings. He walked one and struck out four. [Josh Anderson](#) tossed three scoreless frames before running into trouble in the eighth when the Hilltoppers plated two insurance runs.

[Rawley Bishop](#) had two of Middle Tennessee's six hits, including his 16th home run of the season, a solo shot in the eighth. Bishop moved all alone into ninth place on the single-season home run chart with the round-tripper.

The Hilltoppers jumped out to an early lead when Matt Hightower lined his second homer in two days over the wall in right with one out in the first.

WKU added to the lead in the second with a leadoff single from Scotty Colt and a J.B. Paxson single to center with one out. After falling behind 1-2, Matt Payton fouled off three pitches against Alvis before placing a single into left on a hanging changeup, driving home Colt for a 2-0 Hilltoppers advantage.

Middle Tennessee ended a 13-inning scoring drought in the third after Drew Robertson led off with a double down the leftfield line. The runner moved to third on a deep fly ball from Matt Ray and scored on Blake McDade's groundout.

WKU's Wade Gaynor bunted his way on to leadoff the fourth and Troy Frazier walked with one out, but Payton grounded out and Scott Kaskie flied out to end the threat.

The Blue Raiders got a single from Bishop and a walk to Zach Barrett in their half of the fourth, but [Grant Box](#) bounced into a 6-4-3 doubleplay to end the inning.

Middle Tennessee had a chance to at least tie the contest in the sixth thanks to some wildness from Paxton. McDade walked to leadoff, Warren walked with one out and Bishop was hit to load the bases. But Paxton struck out Barrett and Box to end the threat with the Hilltoppers clinging to a one-run lead.

In the seventh the Blue Raiders again missed an opportunity to tie the game after [Doug Birkofer](#) led off with a single and moved to second on Robertson's sacrifice bunt. Matt Ray laced a ball right at second baseman Payton for the second out and McDade popped out to end the inning.

The Hilltoppers added to their lead in the eighth, scoring twice. Terrence Dayleg and Casey Hamilton both singled to leadoff the inning before Colt hit a slicing double down the rightfield line that bounced over the wall, plating Dayleg.

Gaynor was hit to load the bases. [Brett Reilley](#) struck out Paxson for the first out but then hit Frazier, forcing in a run. Payton struck out and Kaskie flied out to end the threat, but not before WKU had a 4-1 advantage.

Bishop hit his solo homer with two outs in the eighth, a blast over the restrooms in left centerfield.

Middle Tennessee will play Wednesday in the Sun Belt Championships and will either be the No. 2 or 3 seed depending on the

outcome of the New Orleans-Louisiana-Lafayette game still underway on Saturday. A UNO win would put the Blue Raiders as the No. 3 seed in the tournament against Florida Atlantic at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, but a New Orleans loss would make Middle Tennessee the No. 2 seed to face Western Kentucky at 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday at Stanky Field in Mobile, Ala.

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