Baseball Drops 7-5 Decision to UNO

Blue Raiders face Florida Atlantic in elimination game Friday morning

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MOBILE, Ala. - Brandon Bowser hit a two-run homer in the eighth, capping a four-run comeback, and starter Bryan Cryer settled down after a rough start to work eight innings, as New Orleans defeated Middle Tennessee, 7-5, Thursday in the Sun Belt Championships at Stanky Field. The loss puts Middle Tennessee (30-27) in the loser's bracket to face Florida Atlantic at 9 a.m. Friday in an elimination game. The Blue Raiders defeated the Owls, 6-1, Wednesday in the opening game of the tournament. Bowser had a run-scoring single in the sixth before hitting an 0-2 pitch against Brett Reilley over the wall in left for his sixth home run of the season, putting the Privateers (35-23) ahead for good. Middle Tennessee scored four runs in the first three innings, one on an RBI single from Wayne Kendrick and three more on Rawley Bishop's 17th homer of the year. The Blue Raiders took a 5-3 lead on a Blake McDade single in the fifth. But UNO kept chipping away, with Bowser's RBI single in the sixth cutting the Blue Raider lead to one before an RBI groundout by Greg Wolfe in the seventh tied the game at five. That set up Bowser for his game-winning homer. Drew Anderson drew a leadoff walk and Jarrod Ware got the sacrifice bunt down with two strikes. Reilley made an 0-2 mistake to the UNO centerfielder, sending the Privateers to their fourth win of the season over Middle Tennessee. Cryer (8-4) got the

win, giving up five runs on 11 hits in eight innings of work. Middle Tennessee had nine hits in the first five innings, but Cryer retired 10 of the last 12 batters he faced. The righthander walked one (intentionally) and struck out six. Blue Raider starter Matt Scott worked 5.2 innings, giving up four runs and eight hits. The righthander walked three, struck out four and hit a batter. He was very sharp the first three innings before running into trouble in the fourth and thereafter, giving up just one hit to the first 12 batters of the contest before allowing seven hits to the next 15 hitters. Reilley (4-3) took the loss, allowing two runs on three hits in one-plus inning of work. "I think they are a very mentally tough ball club," head coach Steve Peterson said. "Matt [Scott] started off very good, but once he got the ball up, he paid for his sins. He just could not get the ball back down and get it over the corners. He is a guy who usually has very good location and keeps the ball down, but once he got it up he really struggled." Kendrick went 3-for-5 and Bishop had two hits and three RBIs. Grant Box also added two hits for Middle Tennessee in the loss, the team's first in the SBC Tournament since 2004 except in bracket play. The Blue Raiders got off to a fast start for the second straight game, with Matt Ray tripling down the rightfield line to leadoff the bottom of the first. Kendrick followed with a single to left, scoring Ray for a quick 1-0 advantage. Kendrick started a two-out rally in the third, bunting his way on, before Adam Warren singled off the end of the bat into short left. Bishop then belted the first pitch from Cryer off the bottom of the scoreboard in leftfield for his 17th home run of the season and a 4-0 Blue Raider lead. The Privateers cut into the lead with three runs in the fourth. T.J. Baxter doubled with one out before Johnny Giovatella hit a 3-0 pitch over the wall in leftcenter, his 14th round-tripper of the year. Wolfe then singled to left and Josh Tarnow singled to rightcenter, putting runners on the corners. A sacrifice fly from Nick Schwaner plated Wolfe. UNO loaded the bases later in the inning after walks to Anderson and Ware, but Bowser bounced out to end the inning without any further damage. Middle Tennessee added a run in the fifth on a pair of hits. Kendrick singled with one out and stole second and with two outs and Bishop was intentionally walked. After falling behind 1-2 in the count, McDade fought back to a full count before singling into rightcenter, plating Kendrick for a 5-3 Blue Raider edge. The Privateers came right back with a run in the sixth. Ware had a two-out double down the leftfield line, chasing Scott from the contest, and Bowser grounded through the leftside for an RBI single. UNO tied the game in the seventh after Baxter led off with a triple to leftcenter, a ball that kept drifting into the gap and away from Warren. With one out Wolfe hit a chopper over the pitcher's mound for an RBI groundout. The Raiders put the tying run on base in the eighth after a leadoff single from Bishop and a two-out single by Zach Barrett. Myles Ervin then hit a check-swing grounder to the rightside and looked like he beat the toss to the bag, but was called out on a bang-bang play. Kendrick reached in the ninth on an error by Giovatella, but Warren grounded out second baseman to pitcher to end the contest. **GAME NOTES**

Rawley Bishop's home run in the third was his 17th of the season, tying for sixth on the single-season list with Bryan Peck (1999, 2000) and Jayhawk Owens (1990). It also pushed Bishop's RBI total to 59 for the year, which ranks eighth on the single-season charts ... Wayne Kendrick had three hits in the game, giving the senior 94 hits for the year, tying for second on the single-season charts with Bryan Peck (2000) and Josh Renick (2001). Kendrick has 67 singles in 2007, ranking third on the single-season list ... Brett Reilley made his 31st appearance in the contest, setting a new single-season mark for games pitched. He passed the previous mark of 30 set by George Oleksik in 1995.

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