Marrs Pitches Raiders to 7-4 Victory

Squad staves off elimination, plays New Orleans later Friday

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MOBILE, Ala. - Nick Marrs tossed four shutout innings for his first save and Middle Tennessee scored three times in the fifth to take the lead for good, defeating Florida Atlantic, 7-4, to stay alive Friday in the Sun Belt Championships at Stanky Field. Marrs, who entered the game 1-4 with an 8.06 ERA this season, allowed just one hit and struck out two in four innings of work, posting his first career save. The righthander threw nine first-pitch strikes to 12 batters and erased the only hit he allowed with a doubleplay in the sixth inning. Jordan Alvis (2-2) tossed five innings for Middle Tennessee (31-27) to get the victory, giving up four runs on five hits with four walks. He allowed a three-run homer in the third but retired nine of the last 11 batters he faced. Florida Atlantic did not have a runner reach scoring position after McKenna's home run in the third, collecting two singles and a walk over the final seven innings. FAU starter Mike Obradovich (9-5) took the loss, giving up six runs on 10 hits in 4.2 innings, striking out three. The Owls used five hurlers over the final 4.1 innings, allowing just two hits and one run. Wayne Kendrick, Blake McDade and Myles Ervin both had a pair of hits for the Blue Raiders, while seven different players drove in runs. Matt Ray and Kendrick drove in runs in the third inning, Grant Box had a run-scoring double in the fourth and Adam Warren, Rawley Bishop and McDade all recorded RBIs in the fifth. Pinch-hitter Matt Campbell also drove in an insurance run with a bloop double in the ninth. "[Nick] Marrs was consistent today. He has a lot of experience, being a starter, short reliever and long reliever, but he's just been inconsistently good this season," head coach Steve Peterson said. "Nick did what I've been asking all of our players to do and that is step up. He is a senior that stepped up and really helped our bullpen. He stayed within himself." Peterson said the Blue Raider offense did just enough in the victory. "We were able to get [the offense] going with our hitting. However, at times we just turn it off. It's got a lot to do with the pitching we are facing, but we are getting some pitches that we take or just miss them. Some of it is mental breakdowns. We have been barely hanging on and fortunately

for us, we won today." FAU scored once in the first but it could have been more. Daniel Cook drew a leadoff walk and Daniel Bomback followed with a single to right. A one-out walk to Mike McKenna loaded the bases. William Block then hit soft fly ball into short rightcenter. Kendrick made a fantastic over-the-shoulder catch running away from the infield. His momentum pushed him further into the outfield, allowing Cook to score on the play. The Blue Raiders scored twice in the third on three hits. Ervin doubled right over the third base bag with one out before a line out from Drew Robertson. Ray then blooped a single into short center, plating Ervin, and Kendrick followed with an RBI double down the leftfield line for a 2-1 Middle Tennessee lead. But the Blue Raider advantage was short-lived, as the Owls answered with three runs in the bottom of the inning. Bomback drew a leadoff walk and Robbie Widlansky fisted a double down the leftfield line. McKenna then hit his 16th home run of the season off the scoreboard in left for a 4-2 FAU advantage. Middle Tennessee plated a run in the fourth when McDade singled with one out and scored on Box's double off the leftfield wall. The Blue Raiders took the lead with three runs in the fifth and could have had more. Robertson singled to leadoff but was forced at second on a groundout from Ray. Kendrick followed with a single to leftcenter and Warren drove home a run with a single to right. Bishop then hit a grounder down the third base line. Block's throw to Bomback was low and looked to be bobbled, but Warren was called out on the play, much to the chagrin of Peterson. Kendrick scored on the play and after a wild pitch allowed Bishop to move to second, McDade had a run-scoring single to right for a 6-4 Middle Tennessee advantage. In the ninth Warren drew a leadoff walk and stole second. Campbell then blooped a single just inside the rightfield line that bounced away from McKenna, allowing Warren to score a big insurance run. Middle Tennessee now plays New Orleans for the second time in two days at 4 p.m. Friday in another elimination contest. **GAME NOTES**

Wayne Kendrick collected two more hits in the contest, raising his season total to 96, just two behind the single-season record of 98 set by Jeff Beachum last year. Kendrick also recorded his 21st double of the season, tying for third on the single-season charts with Jayhawk Owens (1990), Marshall Nisbett (2002) and Clay Snellgrove (1997) ... Drew Robertson had two sacrifice bunts in the contest, raising his single-season record total to 15 and passing the previous mark of 13 set by Chuck Akers (2004) ... Rawley Bishop drove in one run in the contest, raising his season total to 60, tying Todd Martin (2006) and Nate Jaggers (2005) for sixth on the single-season list ... Matt Ray collected his 22nd stolen base in the game, tying Ben Lankster (1976) for 10th on the single-season charts.

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