Archer, Kemp Lead Offense in 10-7 Victory

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee's Josh Archer hit a grand slam for an early lead and Shane Kemp's two-run double in the eighth provided insurance in a 10-7 triumph over Lipscomb on a cold and blustery day at Dugan Field Tuesday afternoon.

The Blue Raiders upped their season record to 8-2, their best start since the 2001 squad began 14-1. Middle Tennessee is 5-2 on its current eight-game road swing that ends Wednesday with a 3 p.m. tilt against Belmont at Greer Stadium in Nashville.

The Blue Raiders scored twice in the first and five times in the third, highlighted by Archer's grand slam over the wall in centerfield, to take a 7-1 advantage. But the home team fought back with a run in the fourth, three more in the fifth and one in the seventh to pull within a run. Kemp then delivered his two-run double off the base of the centerfield wall in a three-run eighth to give the Blue Raiders breathing room and win their fourth straight outing.

Middle Tennessee (8-2) starter Shay Horseman, making his first start of the year, lasted four-plus innings before giving way to redshirt freshman Tyler Copeland, who made his first career appearance as a Blue Raider. Copeland (1-0) came in and allowed two runs, one earned, on five hits in two-plus innings to get the win.

Copeland got help from Travis Horschel, who entered in the seventh with the bases loaded and no one out, worked out of the jam, allowing just a run and then tossing two scoreless innings to get his first save of the year. Horschel gave up a run on three hits with a walk and a strikeout.

The Blue Raiders got on the board in the top of the first when Chris LeGuenec laced a two-run, two-out double into rightcenter, his first hit of the season.

The Bisons came back with a run in their half of the first thanks to three hits from the first four batters. The run scored on a fielder's choice by Zack Miller.

Eric McNamee walked and Jeff Beachum was hit for the second time in as many at-bats to leadoff

the third before Shane Kemp loaded the bases with a single for Brett Carroll, who lined to out center, scoring McNamee. After a single from LeGuenec loaded the bases again for Archer, who drilled one over the wall in centerfield for a grand slam and a 7-1 Blue Raider lead.

A double and single started the fifth inning for Lipscomb, with the Blue Raiders going to the bullpen for Copeland. Horseman allowed four runs on eight hits with six strikeouts before departing.

A fielder's choice loaded the bases before Ryan Boyer's line drive to center plated a run. Blue Raider shortstop Beachum cut off the throw and threw to second to get the tagging runner, but the throw was wild and got by McNamee, rolling all the way to the wall in foul territory and allowing the bases to clear, cutting the Blue Raider lead to 7-5.

Lipscomb loaded the bases in the seventh with three straight singles, two of the bloop variety. The Blue Raiders went to the bullpen again, this time for Horschel, Todd Boucher flied out to left, scoring a run, but Kemp gunned down a runner trying to take third on the play. Horschel induced a ground ball to end the inning with the Blue Raiders holding a precarious 7-6 advantage.

Middle Tennessee added to the lead in the eighth, loading the bases with singles from Ryan Darnell and Chuck Akers and a walk to McNamee. Beachum's fielder's choice got one run home before Kemp's double off the base of the centerfield wall scored a pair and gave the Blue Raiders some breathing room at 10-6. Kemp, Carroll and LeGuenec all had two hits apiece, with LeGuenec driving in three runs. Beachum scored three times and McNamee twice, as the top five hitters in the lineup accounted for six of the team's nine hits and scored eight of the 10 runs.

Middle Tennessee returns home this weekend to face 2003 College World Series participant Southwest Missouri State in a three-game series starting Friday at Reese Smith Field.

GAME NOTES

Junior Brett Carroll batted cleanup for just the fourth time in his career and the first time this season. Carroll singles in the first to extend his hitting streak to seven games ... Sophomore hurler Shay Horseman made his first start of the season. It was also Horseman's first appearance of the year ... Junior Chris LeGuenec doubled in the first, driving home two runs, his first hit of the year ... Redshirt freshman Tyler Copeland made his first career appearance on the mound, throwing two-plus innings ... Junior Eric McNamee reached base via two walks and has now reached base in all 10 games, scoring a run in every contest.

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