

## Late Rally Not Enough in 6-5 Loss

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**MURFREESBORO, Tenn.** - Middle Tennessee scored a run in the eighth and had the tying run on the ninth, but could not rally late, falling 6-5 to Southwest Missouri State Saturday afternoon at Reese Smith Field. The visiting Bears (5-7) knocked around Blue Raider starter John Williams, homering twice and building a 6-4 lead, including an insurance run in the seventh on a single by Kirk McConnell. Josh Archer's pinch-hit solo homer in the eighth made it a one-run game, but the Blue Raiders (10-3) were unable to score Nate Jagers in the ninth after a pinch-hit single. SMS freshman Brett Sinkbeil (1-1) got off to a rocky start, as Middle Tennessee scored twice in the first, their fourth straight game to score a pair



of runs in their first at-bat. Two more Blue Raiders scored in the second before Sinkbeil settled down, holding Middle Tennessee scoreless for the next three-plus innings before giving way to the bullpen. The righthander gave up four runs on seven hits in five-plus innings, striking out four and walking two. SMS scored twice in the second on a two-run homer to leftcenter by Tim Rafferty and three times in the third on a three-run shot to dead centerfield from Jud Kindle, both times erasing early Middle advantages. Williams settled down for the Blue Raiders after the third, retiring 10 of 11 batters before running into trouble in the seventh. The Bears took advantage of a walk to start the seventh, moving the runner over with a sacrifice bunt before McConnell's third hit of the game, a single to left to score pinch-runner Brooks Colvin. Williams (3-1) suffered the loss, allowing six runs on seven hits in 6.2 innings, striking out six and walking two. In the first, Eric McNamee led off with a double down the leftfield line before Jeff Beachum cranked a two-run homer over the wall in leftcenter for an early 2-0 Blue Raider lead. It was Beachum's first career round-tripper. A one-out single by Jake Manning for SMS in the second preceded Rafferty's shot, tying the game at two. In the bottom of the inning, a Ryan Darnell single and a walk to Troy Harp set the table for a triple by Chuck Akers, plating both runners for a 4-2 advantage. Rafferty and McConnell both singled to start the third for the Bears, but Williams got two outs before Kindle's shot gave SMS the lead for good.

McConnell went 3-for-5 in the game and has five of his team's 12 hits in the series. For the Blue Raiders, McNamee, Derek Phillips and Darnell each had two hits. The two teams play the rubber game in the three-game series Sunday at 1 p.m. at Reese Smith Field. The Blue Raiders travel to Samford Tuesday and Wednesday before returning home next weekend to face Dayton. **GAME**

#### **NOTES**

Middle Tennessee scored twice in the first, their fourth straight game to score a pair of runs in their first at-bat ... Jeff Beachum's homer in the first inning was the first of his career ... Eric McNamee extended his streak of reaching base in every game with a double to start the first. He also scored in the inning and has scored in every contest. McNamee leads the team with 24 runs scored and 23 hits, as well as 14 walks, in the 13 outings.

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