

## Darnell's Homer the Difference in 5-3 Win

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### **MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -**

Ryan Darnell's two-run homer in the bottom of the eighth broke a tie game and helped Middle Tennessee defeat Southwest Missouri State, 5-3, on a cloudy and dreary Sunday afternoon at Reese Smith Field, giving the Blue Raiders a series victory over the Bears. Chase Eakes singled with two outs before Darnell's game-winning blast, his first career home run. It came with the game tied at three in the eighth against SMS reliever Paul Marsala, a full count pitch to the opposite field that hit the top of the rightfield wall and bounced out, giving the Blue Raiders

the lead again after the Bears tied the game in the top of the inning. The hit capped a 3-for-4 day for Darnell with three RBIs and two runs scored. Middle Tennessee erased an early 2-0 deficit with a single run in the second and two runs in the fourth. Darnell plated the first Blue Raider run with a single in the second. Eric McNamee had an RBI sacrifice fly in the fourth before Jeff Beachum's RBI double gave the Blue Raiders the lead. Blue Raider starter Steve Kline settled down after the first two innings, retiring 12 of the last 14 hitters he faced. The junior lefthander worked out of a bases loaded jam in the second after allowing two runs, getting a ground ball to third baseman Brett Carroll, who knocked it down, stepped on the bag and completed the doubleplay to end the inning. Reliever Danny Borne got four outs before walking the first batter in the eighth, giving way to Chase Swing with a 3-2 Blue Raider lead. Swing had trouble locating after not working in a week and gave up the tying hit, a single to left by Jud Kindle, scoring Brooks Colvin to knot the score at three. The Bears had a chance to tie the game in the ninth, getting a pair of walks and putting runners on the corners before Colvin flied out to center to end the contest. Swing (1-0) got the win, striking out two in two innings of work, giving the Blue Raiders their seventh win in eight games. SMS got off to a quick start when Kindle singled with one out in the second before Ryan Gotcher hit a line drive that just cleared the wall in rightcenter for an early 2-0 Bears advantage. Marsala (0-2) suffered the loss, giving up two runs on two hits in four innings. Marsala retired 11 of 12 batters before the single by Eakes in the eighth. SMS starter John Findley gave up three runs on six hits in four innings. Middle Tennessee travels to Birmingham, Ala., to face Samford in a two-game series starting Tuesday at 6 p.m. The Blue Raiders return home next weekend, hosting Dayton in a three-game series beginning

Friday at 3 p.m.

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