Aggie Bats Too Much in Finale

March 28, 2004 · MT Media Relations

LAS CRUCES, N.M. - Adrian Ballesteros homered twice and drove in five runs and Mark Aranda added three hits, four RBIs and four runs scored, as New Mexico State used four three-run innings to defeat Middle Tennessee, 12-3, and win the rubber game of the series here Sunday at Preslew Askew Field. The Aggies (22-7-1, 2-1 SBC) won their third straight series over the Blue Raiders and did it by scoring three times in the second, third, fourth and eighth innings. All four series since 2001 between the two teams have been decided on Sunday, with NMSU taking the last three. Middle Tennessee has lost five of the last six games since winning 10 of 11 outings. "Three was the lucky number for [New Mexico State] today," Blue Raider head coach Steve Peterson said. "We hit some balls early on the nose, but that's just baseball. They turned a big doubleplay in the first on [Jeff] Beachum's ball and that's just the way things went today." New Mexico State took the first lead of the game with a three-run second inning. Aranda dumped a double down the leftfield line to leadoff the inning before Ballesteros blasted his second home run of the series well over the wall in leftfield. Gavin Monjeras followed with a single and scored on a two-out single to center by Chris Ewen for a 3-0 Aggie lead. The Aggies chased Blue Raider starter Steve Kline in the third, thanks to a walk and singles from Billy Becher and Aranda. Ballesteros then doubled against reliever Travis Horschel, plating another run for a 5-0 NMSU advantage. Another single, this one by Emory Davies, plated Aranda for a 6-0 Aggie lead before Shay Horseman came on to get an inning-ending doubleplay. The Blue Raiders (15-8, 1-2) cut the lead in half in the fourth thanks to some clutch hitting. Brett Carroll walked to leadoff before a double down the leftfield line by Derek Phillips put runners on second and third with nobody out. One batter later Marcus Taylor dumped a single over the head of Monjeras at shortstop to drive in Carroll. Troy Harp then delivered a two-out, two-run double, belting a double off the wall in centerfield to score Phillips and Taylor and cut the Aggie lead to 6-3. But New Mexico State answered with its third three-run inning. A pair of walks set the table for Aranda, who blasted his 12th homer of the season over the rightfield wall to give the home team a 9-3 lead. NMSU added the final three runs of the contest in the eighth, the first run scoring on a throwing error before the second two-run homer of the game by Ballesteros. Kline (1-2) suffered the loss, allowing

six runs on seven hits in two-plus innings, walking one and striking out one. The stint ties for the shortest in Kline's career as a starter, as he also went two-plus against Mississippi State in last year's NCAA Regional. Rory Coppinger (5-1) picked up the win for the Aggies, tossing five innings of three-hit, scoreless relief. Coppinger walked two and struck out one. NMSU starter Jason Conner allowed three runs on four hits in four innings. "Throughout the series [New Mexico State] played better than us," Peterson added. "Their bullpen was better than ours and we made mistakes in RBI situations and they just swung the bat well. "Kline is really not locating his fastball and is making mistakes with that pitch, so teams are sitting on his breaking ball. He's been doing that all season and that's really the big difference from last season." Middle Tennessee renews its rivalry with former OVC foe Tennessee Tech this week, playing a home-and-home with the Golden Eagles starting Tuesday at 7 p.m. at Reese Smith Field. **GAME NOTES**

The stint ties for the shortest in Kline's career as a starter, as he also went two-plus against Mississippi State in last year's NCAA Regional ... Troy Harp extended his hitting streak to seven games with a double in the fourth. The seven-game streak is the longest of Harp's career. His previous long hitting streak before this season was four games ... The Blue Raiders have lost five of six after winning 10 of 11 outings.

Printed on April 17, 2014
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/2874