Blue Raiders Rally for 7-6 Victory

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CLARKSVILLE, Tenn. - Shane Kemp's double helped score the tying run and a single from Nate Jaggers plated the go-ahead run, as Middle Tennessee scored twice in the ninth to come from behind and defeat Austin Peay, 7-6, Wednesday night at Raymond C. Hand Park. The Blue Raiders (18-11) jumped out early, 3-0, only to see the homestanding Governors tie the game with two runs in the second and one run in the fourth. Both teams scored twice in the sixth before APSU took the lead with an unearned run in the eighth. But Kemp was in the middle of the comeback again, as he was last Friday night when he belted not one, but two, game-tying home runs in a 14-inning loss to Louisiana-Lafayette. Middle Tennessee's Jeff Beachum singled with one out in the ninth, tying his career high with his fourth hit of the night. Kemp then laced a double down the leftfield line. Beachum got on his horse and when APSU's Alfredo Burkeen fumbled the ball down the line, Blue Raider head coach Steve Peterson did not hesitate to wave Beachum to the plate, who just beat the relay to tie the game at six. Nate Jaggers then singled sharply to right, scoring Kemp with the eventual winning run for a 7-6 Blue Raider lead. Matt Scott (2-1), the fourth Middle Tennessee pitcher, walked the leadoff batter and hit another with two outs in the ninth, but the redshirt freshman struck out the side in the frame to get his second win of the year. Scott worked two innings, allowing an unearned run with two walks and four strikeouts. "I've been competing against Austin Peay for many years, and the games are always very tight all the way through," Peterson said. "We were fortunate to get to their relief pitcher in the ninth and get a victory. "Both clubs left a lot of runners on base. Shane [Kemp] did a good job adjusting after a bad at-bat in the seventh. Jaggers has been scuffling but did a great job going the other way to drive home Kemp." The Blue Raiders got a run in the first when Eric McNamee led off with a single and Chuck Akers followed with a perfect bunt single. Beachum then singled off the glove of APSU third baseman Jared Walker, driving in McNamee for a 1-0 lead. Middle Tennessee added two more runs in the second. Jaggers reached on an error to leadoff and Josh Archer walked. Jaggers scored on a double just inside the leftfield line by Michael McKenry. McNamee drove in Archer later in the frame with a sacrifice fly for an early 3-0 Blue Raider lead. The Govs (19-8) scored twice in their half of the second, as Walker singled and Tommy Smith walked.

APSU executed the doubled steal to perfection to put runners in scoring position, but Blue Raider starter Shay Horseman battled back to get two outs before giving up a single to Rob Bethke, scoring two runs and cutting the Middle Tennessee lead to 3-2. The Blue Raiders loaded the bases in the top of the third on three straight singles to leadoff from Beachum, Kemp and Brett Carroll. The Govs made a pitching change and reliever Scott Steinbrecher came on to get a fielder's choice, a strikeout and a foul out to end the threat, leaving the bases loaded. APSU tied the game in the fourth when Smith doubled, went to third on a passed ball and scored on Chris Hyde's sac fly. The Blue Raiders retook the lead in the sixth with two more unearned runs. Pinch-hitter Derek Phillips reached on an error with one out and McKenry collected his second double of the contest. Chase Eakes drove home a run with a single up the middle before McNamee's second sacrifice fly of the game scored McKenry for a 5-3 Middle Tennessee advantage. Again the Governors came back to tie the contest, scoring twice in their half of the sixth on three hits. After a hit and a walk, the Blue Raiders went to Steve Kline to get out of the jam, but Bethke dumped a single in front of Eakes to load the bases. Kline got a strikeout but Matthew Ledbetter chopped a two-out single through the middle, scoring two runs and tying the game at five. APSU got a leadoff double from Hyde to start the eighth, chasing Kline in favor of Matt Scott. After an out and an intentional walk to Bethke, who was 3-for-3 to that point in the game, Marcus Pearson singled sharply to right. Pinch-runner Brett Luther tried to score from second on the play, but Kemp's throw to the plate nailed the runner, keeping the game tied. The next batter, Ledbetter, blooped a ball behind the mound where McNamee fielded and threw to first, but Phillips was unable to handle the throw, allowing Bethke to score the go-ahead run for a 6-5 Govs lead. APSU closer Adam Carrico (2-3) took the loss, giving up two runs, one earned, on three hits in one inning of work. Beachum's four hits led a 13-hit attack for the Blue Raiders, while Kemp and McKenry both had a pair of hits. Middle Tennessee hits the road this weekend for a Sun Belt Conference series at Florida International, beginning Friday with a 7 p.m. ET start at University Park on the FIU campus. Saturday's contest starts at 1 p.m. ET and the finale on Sunday begins at Noon ET. The Blue Raiders return home next week to start a seven-game homestand starting Tuesday against Belmont at 7 p.m. at Reese Smith Field. **GAME NOTES**

Junior Eric McNamee led off the game with a single to center, extending his hitting streak to six games. McNamee has hit safely in 25 of the 29 games this season and reached base in all but one contest ... Junior Brett Carroll singled in the third to extend his hitting streak to six games, as well ... Junior Steve Kline made his second consecutive relief appearance after 21 straight starts dating to the start of the 2003 season ... Jeff Beachum collected four hits in the contest, tying his career high. It was Beachum's 11th multi-hit game of the year and second four-hit contest of the season ...

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