

Kemp, Carroll Homers Lead 8-4 Victory

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MIAMI, Fla. - Brett Carroll and Shane Kemp both hit three-run homers and Chris Mobley tossed six-plus innings to lead Middle Tennessee to an 8-4 victory over Florida International in Sun Belt Conference action here Friday night at University Park. Derek Phillips tied his career high with three hits in the contest for Middle Tennessee, as well, as the Blue Raiders got their first Friday night conference win of the year. The victory was the first in four tries in Miami and just the third win in 10 tries against the Golden Panthers since joining the Sun Belt. Middle Tennessee (19-11, 3-4 SBC) jumped out to a

7-1 lead with a home run from Carroll in the second and another shot from Kemp in the fifth as well as adding a single run in the sixth on an RBI single by Jeff Beachum. The Blue Raiders made three errors in the final four innings, giving FIU (20-18, 5-2) added opportunities but made it through with strong relief work from Steve Kline after Mobley's good outing. Mobley (5-2) allowed four runs, three earned, on seven hits with seven strikeouts in six-plus innings before giving way to Kline after a leadoff single in the seventh. Kline worked out of a bases-loaded, no-out jam in the seventh, retired the side in the eighth and induced a game-ending doubleplay to earn his second save in three relief chances in the last six days. The Blue Raiders touched Golden Panther starter Derek DeCarlo (2-7) for seven runs and a dozen hits in six innings. DeCarlo beat the Blue Raiders two seasons ago in Miami and tossed three shutout innings of relief last year in Murfreesboro. Kemp, Carroll and Nate Jagers all had a pair of hits in the win for the Blue Raiders. "Good pitchers, which DeCarlo is, have a tendency to not have their best stuff in the early innings and make some mistakes," Blue Raider head coach Steve Peterson said. "We wanted to be patient and aggressive and we kept him on the ropes in the first three or four innings. We hit some balls hard and got a big home run from Carroll and then one from Kemp, played Earl Weaver-ball there. "After that, we had to weather storms. They had a three-run inning that could have been worse. It didn't have to be a three-run inning. We made some mistakes but weathered the storm." "You really can't say enough about Steve Kline. In the beginning he was a little shaky, but he settled down and got through it." Middle Tennessee got off to a quick start against the Golden Panthers, scoring three times in the second and putting together four straight hits in the inning. Phillips started the inning with a wind-blown double, a ball that looked

to be going foul but the wind played tracks with FIU leftfielder Fernando Alvarez and the ball fell fair down the leftfield line. Kemp then singled to center before Carroll belted the first pitch over the wall in leftcenter for his fifth home run of the season, giving the Blue Raiders a 3-0 lead. Jagers followed with a single, but DeCarlo settled down without any further damage in the frame. FIU got a run in the fourth on an infield chopper over the mound from Fernando Alvarez. The Panthers loaded the bases later in the inning with one out, but Mobley got a strikeout and a groundout to end the inning without any more damage. The Blue Raiders came right back in support of their pitcher, as Beachum walked and Phillips doubled for the second time in the game. Kemp then hit a towering drive that just cleared the wall in rightfield, his ninth round-tripper of the season, giving Middle Tennessee a 6-1 edge. A leadoff single by Troy Harp turned into another run for the Blue Raiders in the sixth when Beachum blooped a two-out single in front of Dennis Diaz in centerfield, scoring Harp from second for a 7-1 lead. But the Panthers would get back in the contest with a three-run bottom of the sixth, taking advantage of a walk and an error. FIU's Yahmed Yema led off the frame with a solo homer, his eighth of the year. A walk and a single preceded a sacrifice bunt from Adrian Casanova, putting runners on second and third with one out. Luis Rivera bounced a slow ground ball to Beachum at short, but the sophomore booted the ball, allowing the second run to score. Jimmy Bacon's sacrifice fly to center plated the final run of the inning, cutting the Blue Raider lead to 7-4. FIU loaded the bases again in the seventh with no outs. A leadoff single by Jeff Skellenger chased Mobley from the contest in favor of lefthander Kline, who allowed an infield single and a walk to load the bases before getting three big outs. Michael Lopez fouled out before a 4-6-3 doubleplay off the bat of Casanova ended the inning with the Blue Raiders holding on to a precarious 7-4 advantage. Middle Tennessee added an insurance run in the eighth without a hit after a leadoff walk to Marcus Taylor. Troy Harp sacrificed Taylor to second with a bunt before McNamee's ground ball moved the runner to third. A wild pitch by FIU's Leo Calderon allowed the run to score for an 8-4 Blue Raider edge. An error and a walk brought Alvarez to the plate in the ninth, but a grounder to Beachum started a game-ending 6-4-3 twinkilling, with McNamee hanging tough on the turn at second. The two teams play again Saturday at 1 p.m. ET at University Park, with the Blue Raiders sending senior John Williams (4-2, 3.05 ERA) against David Asher (1-2, 3.82 ERA), a pair of lefthanders. The series concludes Sunday 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 Brett Carroll extended his hitting streak to seven with a three-run homer in the second inning. The round-tripper moved Carroll into a tie for 10th on the all-time list at Middle Tennessee with 30 home runs. He is tied with George Zimmerman (1986-89, 30). It also gave Carroll RBIs 100-102 on the homer ... Junior Nate Jagers has hit safely in four games with his single in the second ... Eric McNamee extended his hitting streak to a season-high seven with a single in the fourth ... Sophomore Jeff Beachum extended his hitting streak to four games with a single in the sixth ... Senior Derek Phillips tied his career high with three hits in the game, the third three-hit game of his career. Phillips' last three-hit contest was April 18 of last year versus South Alabama ... With seven strikeouts in the contest, junior righthander Chris Mobley moved into seventh place on the all-time strikeout list with 182. Mobley passed Greg Johnson (1985-87, 177) and Jack Laverty (1971-74, 181) in the game ... In two career appearances before Friday's game, FIU starter Derek DeCarlo was 1-0 in 11.0 innings of work in two appearances, allowing three runs on three hits with 13 strikeouts. The junior righthander gave up seven runs on 12 hits with four strikeouts in the contest.