

Eighth-Inning Blast Dooms Blue Raiders, 2-0

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MIAMI, Fla. - J.P. Lehmann's two-run homer in the bottom of the eighth was the difference for Florida International in a 2-0 victory over Middle Tennessee in Sun Belt Conference action here Saturday afternoon at University Park. The two teams combined for just 12 hits in a game that took just less than two hours. Blue Raider starter John Williams (4-3) was the tough-luck loser, allowing the two-run homer to Lehmann in the eighth after not allowing a hit from the third until the decisive eighth. Middle Tennessee's Nate Jagers collected three of his team's six hits in the contest,

including a leadoff single in the ninth. But the Blue Raiders (19-12, 3-5 SBC) lined out with the next three hitters to suffer the loss. FIU's Danny Hernandez (5-0) got the win with 1.2 innings of scoreless relief, allowing just the single to Jagers in the ninth. Golden Panther starter David Asher did most of the work on the mound for the home team, giving up five hits with four strikeouts in 7.1 innings. In the eighth FIU's Brian Aragon singled with one out but was thrown out trying to steal second by Middle Tennessee's Troy Harp. Leadoff hitter Dennis Diaz then bunted for a single down the first base line. Diaz, 31-for-32 in stolen bases entering the game, broke for second and was picked off by Williams, but Diaz made the Blue Raiders work in the run down and eventually made it past a tag from Eric McNamee. After sliding into second, Diaz realized there was no one at third base and raced to the bag, stealing two bases on the play. Williams refocused his energies to the plate but left a pitch up to Lehmann, who hit it over the wall in rightcenter for the only runs of the contest. Neither team could muster quality scoring chances and each missed a home run down the leftfield line by a matter of feet. FIU's Cody Jacobs belted a 3-1 pitch in the fourth that cleared the wall in left about three feet to the left of the foul pole. Middle Tennessee's Jeff Beachum blasted the first pitch of his at-bat in the sixth well over the wall but foul down the line. The Golden Panthers (21-18, 6-2) got a single and a hit batter in the third but Jeff Skellenger lined out to left to end that inning, the only inning where a team had more than one baserunner in an inning in the contest. "I thought we took a lot of good swings today but hit the ball hard at people and that's just baseball," Blue Raider head coach Steve Peterson said. "It hurt us with the rundown and we didn't execute very well and that made the difference." The series concludes Sunday at Noon ET, with Middle Tennessee sending

sophomore BJ Church to the mound, as the Blue Raiders try to win their first series in four tries against the Golden Panthers. 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 Nate Jagers extended his hitting streak to five games with a double in the first ... Junior Brett Carroll doubled in the second to extend his hitting streak to eight games, his third eight-game hitting streak this season.

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