

Late Push Enough for 6-4 Victory

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Nate Jagers' RBI single in the seventh broke a tie and Middle Tennessee added an insurance run in the eighth to take a 6-4 victory and win the series over Arkansas State Sunday afternoon at Reese Smith Field.

The Blue Raiders (23-13, 6-6 SBC) scored four runs in the fourth to take a three-run lead, but watched the visiting Indians peck away at the deficit and tie the contest with a run in the sixth.

Jagers singled through the middle with two outs in the seventh, scoring Chuck Akers with the eventual winning run. Derek Phillips and Shane Kemp had back-to-back doubles in the eighth to add an insurance run.

Blue Raider reliever Eric Blevins (4-1) worked four shutout innings to get the win, allowing just two hits with three strikeouts. Middle Tennessee starter BJ Church allowed four runs, three earned, on four hits with eight strikeouts with five-plus innings.

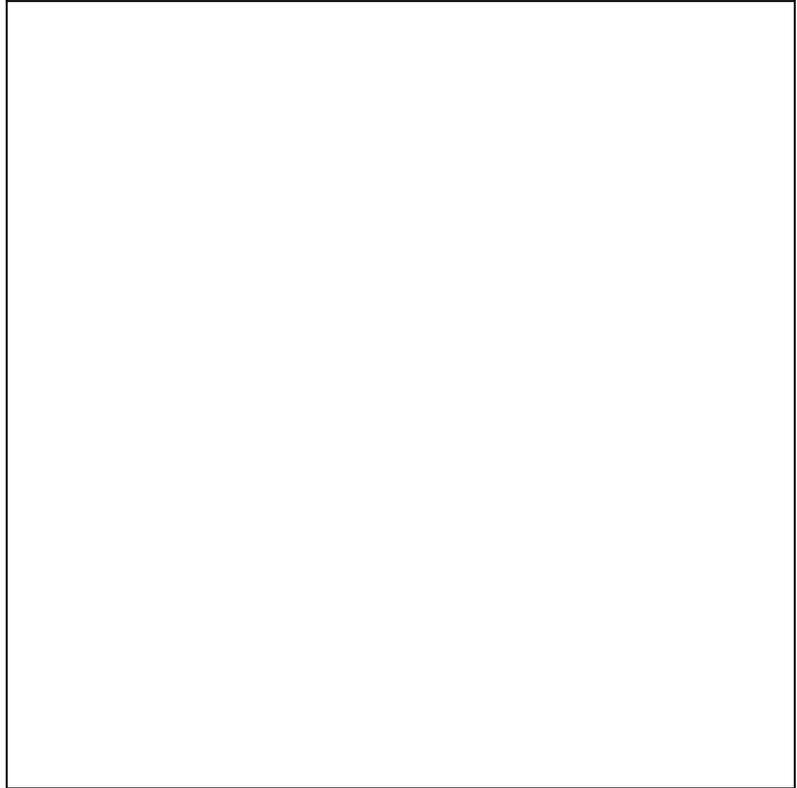
Brett Carroll had two hits for the Blue Raiders, leading the eight-hit attack. Carroll also extended his hitting streak to 13 games, a career-high and the longest hitting streak for a Middle Tennessee player since Chad Cooper's 14-game streak last season.

ASU starter Karnie Vertz (2-4) took the loss, giving up five runs, three earned, on six hits in seven innings.

The Indians (18-19, 3-9) scored a run in the third to take an early lead, with Geoff Desmond drawing a one-out walk before consecutive singles by Adam Roberson and Brad Burkhead drove in the run.

In the fourth the Blue Raiders scored four times on three hits with the aid of two ASU errors.

Carroll singled and Kemp walked before Marcus Taylor's RBI single to right. After the second out of the inning, Michael McKenry doubled down the leftfield line, scoring Kemp.



ASU's Isaac Dillon tried to make a play on McKenry at second, but the throw bounced away, allowing Taylor to score with some heads-up baserunning. McKenry then stole second and scored when the throw went into leftfield, giving Middle Tennessee a 4-1 edge.

But the Indians chipped away at the lead, scoring twice in the fifth and once in the sixth to tie the game at four.

Andy Runyan walked before Desmond belted a two-run shot over the leftfield wall in the fifth, cutting the Blue Raider lead to one. A leadoff double from Mike Sirianni in the sixth chased Church from the contest.

The next batter chopped one to third, and Carroll's throw was low and got away from Phillips at first, allowing Sirianni to move to third. A fielder's choice by Monte Douglas plated the tying run.

Middle Tennessee took the lead again in the seventh after Akers doubled to left with one out. A wild pitch allowed the senior to move to third, but Eric McNamee lined out to a drawn-in infield. Jagers then singled through the middle, scoring Akers with the go-ahead run.

In the eighth Phillips doubled to leftcenter before Kemp dropped a double into short leftcenter in front of a diving Roberson, plating pinch-runner Wayne Kendrick with the insurance run.

Middle Tennessee improved to 4-0 all-time against the Indians in Sun Belt Conference series and 9-4 overall in games played.

The Blue Raiders host Vanderbilt Tuesday at 7 p.m. at Reese Smith Field in "Pack the Park" Night presented by Comcast. The first 500 fans will receive a Blue Raider Baseball t-shirt sponsored by Comcast and one Middle Tennessee student will win two roundtrip tickets from Southwest Airlines.

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