Middle Tennessee Softball Falls 7-5 to New Mexico

Match up against #2 Alabama later on Saturday

February 16, 2008 · David Powell

TUSCALOOSA, Ala - Middle Tennessee had a season-high five runs on eight hits but the Blue Raiders (1-6, 0-0) could not complete a valiant comeback as they lost 7-5 to the New Mexico Lobos (4-2, 0-0) at the Crimson Classic on Saturday afternoon. Middle Tennessee was coming off a 6-0 loss to #2 Alabama on Friday night. Kellie Head (1-3) got the start and the loss on the mound for the Blue Raiders, giving up four runs on eight hits, while walking one in 3.0 innings of action. Lindsey Vander Lugt threw 4.0 innings in the relief appearance. The Sophomore gave up two earned runs on four hits, while striking out two. Kyla Nelson (2-2) got the start and the win for the Lobos. She gave up two runs on seven hits, while striking out three and walking two in the complete game The Blue Raiders opened the game strong on the defensive side of the ball. Tianna George doubled to deep right field, but Caitlin McLure threw to Ashley Cline on the relay who then threw a laser to Whittney Padgett at third base for the out. New Mexico jumped out to a 1-0 lead in the top of the 3rd inning when Kimberly Holyfield hit an RBI double to right-center field. Once again, the Blue Raiders were on hand to throw the runner out as Holyfield over ran second base and was tagged out by Brittney Banania after the relay throw from Cline. Banania leads Blue Raider defense with 2.4 assists per game. Middle Tennessee responded in dramatic fashion during the bottom half of the inning. With two outs, Cline and McLure were on hand to provide two straight doubles. They both advanced on wild pitch to put

the runners at second and third base before Banania's hard shot was bobbled by the second baseman, allowing both Cline and a hustling McLure to score. McLure went 2-for-3 with a RBI and a run scored. She leads the team with a .357 batting average. The 2-1 Blue Raider lead would not last long, however. New Mexico's Gabriella Parra nailed a three run homerun just inside the left field foul pole to retake the lead in the 4th inning, 4-2. The Lobos added three more runs in the 6th inning to increase the lead to 7-2, the last run coming off an Ashley Allen RBI bunt single. The Blue Raiders started the 7th inning with three straight singles courtesy of Corrie Abel and pinch hitter Whitney Darlington. Jessica Ives cut the lead to 7-3 with an RBI single up the middle and Cline reached on an error by the third baseman to load the bases. McLure walked to force Darlington across the plate and cut the New Mexico lead to 7-4. Banania grounded out to the shortstop and pinch runner Kelsey Dortch scored to cut the UNM advantage to 7-5. However, the comeback was not to be as Martha Davis struck out to end the game. Senior Ashley Cline batted 2-for-4 with a run scored. Middle Tennessee returns to action at 3:30 PM as they match up against hosts #2 Alabama for the second time in 24 hours. Follow the action live at GoBlueRaiders.com with Russell Luna providing play-by-play.

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