

February 28, 2008

Blue Raiders Slam Belmont Dean hits first home run on way to win

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. - Junior **Zach Dean** hit the first home run of his career on Thursday to help lead Middle Tennessee to an 8-1 win over Belmont.

Dean led the Blue Raiders (4-0-1) offensively as he ended the game 3 for 4 with three RBI and scored two runs including hitting a two-run home run, the first of his career, in his first outing of the season.

Junior **Nathan Hines** also performed well for Middle Tennessee as he went 1 for 5 with three RBI, and scored one run. Hines' triple was the third of his career as he last hit one in 2005 against Lipscomb.

"We had timely hitting. We did not swing the bats really well but we had timely hitting. Nathan's triple with the bases loaded and **Zach Dean**'s two-run home run early were both very timely. That is what wins games, hitting with runners on base not how many hits you get," head coach Steve Peterson said.

Sophomore **Chad Edwards** took the win on the mound as he allowed one run on eight hits in five innings of work.

Senior **Langdon Stanley**, junior **Brett Smalley** and freshman **Matt Doss** pitched four innings of relief allowing just two hits.

As a team, the Blue Raiders scored eight runs on seven hits with no errors while Belmont (2-2) recorded 10 hits but scored just one run. The Bruins used five pitchers in the game with Chad Fromm taking the loss as he pitched three innings allowing seven runs on four hits.

"With an 8-1 ballgame obviously our pitching did very well but we had a lot of 3-2 counts where we turned a big double play to get us out of the inning. We made the pitch when we had to but we just have to get efficient pounding the strike zone and hitting the pitch. It is early, timing and rhythm goes along with it but we just have to get more efficient," Peterson said.

Middle Tennessee started the scoring in the second inning as Dean, in his first at bat of the season, singled to score Ervin from second. With the bases loaded and two outs Hines tripled to clear the bases for Middle Tennessee giving the Blue Raiders a 4-0 lead. Hines then scored on a passed ball to round out the scoring for Middle Tennessee, 5-0.

Belmont added one run in the bottom of the third on a hit by Derek Wiley with the bases loaded to make the score, 5-1.

Dean hit a home run in his second at bat of the day which scored Dennis from first and



Junior Zach Dean went 3 for 4 with 3 RBI and scored two runs in the 8-1 win over the Bruins. ()

extended Middle Tennessee's lead to 7-1.

The Blue Raiders added another run in the top of the fifth as Barrett scored from third on a fielder's choice on a hit by Brentz to extend the lead to 8-1.

Middle Tennessee will begin its home slate on Friday, Feb. 29 when it faces Toledo in the first game of a three-game series. First pitch is set for 3 p.m. at Reese Smith Field.

For all game day information, such as gate entrance and ticket information, please visit the baseball page at www.goblueraiders.com. Dick Palmer will have the play-by-play on WMTS 88.3 FM and on www.goblueraiders.com. Live stats will be available for the weekend series on www.goblueraiders.com.

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