Blue Raiders Fall to Toledo on Sunday

Brentz hits two home runs in 19-8 loss

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee could not complete the sweep of Toledo on Sunday as it fell 19-8 in the final game of the three-game series. The Blue Raiders (6-1-1) used six pitchers during the game allowing 19 runs on 21 hits, three home runs and 13 base on balls. Toledo (2-3) put the lead off hitter on base in all but the ninth inning during the game. "Anyone involved in baseball knows that if you don't get the leadoff guy out the percentage goes up of scoring a run. It was just a bad day all around, offensively, defensively, pitching and everything starts with your pitchers, then to your catcher and it moves out. You have to be solid all the way around," head coach Steve Peterson said. Freshman PJ Francescon took the loss on the mound as he pitched four innings allowing six runs on five hits and walked six. "We weren't solid on the mound and it just took off from there. One thing about PJ is he has a lot of talent but he just struggled with the strike zone. Hopefully he will develop into a good solid pitcher," Peterson said. Offensively, the Blue Raiders were led by freshman Bryce Brentz who was 2 for 5 with four RBI, two home runs and scored two runs. Middle Tennessee also saw assistance from sophomore Grant Box and freshman Justin Miller were each 2 for 4 while junior Rawley Bishop ended the day 2 for 5. As a team, Middle Tennessee recorded 13 hits with three doubles and two home runs. Sunday's game was the first time since May 19, 2006 an opposing team scored 18 or more runs in a win over the Blue Raiders. "We had misplays, dropped a couple of fly balls, a few passed balls and a missed pickoff at second. All of this adds up in your pitch count and our pitchers were their own worst enemy with pitch location and getting behind in the count. They just beat us," head coach Steve Peterson said. Toledo loaded the bases in the first inning with no outs but only scored two runs on a single by Aaron Dudley as the Blue Raiders got out of the inning, 2-0 Rockets. Middle Tennessee responded in the bottom of the inning as Brentz hit his third home run of the season to score senior Zach Barrett

from second and tie the game at two. Bishop gave the lead back to the Blue Raiders with his single to centerfield which scored junior Taylor Dennis from second. Then Miller doubled which brought in Bishop from second and extended the lead to two, 4-2 MT. The Rockets tied the game on a singled to right field by Josh Johnson in the top of the fifth. Nate McKeon doubled to score one more run while Jared Hoying singled to bring in two more runs. Hoying added another run a single by Tim Krofcheck. The Rockets scored six runs on five hits in the top of the fifth to take an 8-4 lead. Toledo picked up right where it left off in the top of the sixth adding three runs on four hits, 11-4. Dudley began the inning with a home run to add to the Rockets lead. Toledo then added two more runs on a single by Krofcheck. McKeon hit a three-run home run with one out in the top of the seventh to take a ten-run lead, 14-4. Brentz hit his second home run of the game in the bottom of the seventh which scored McDade from first, 14-6. Then junior Nathan Hines added a run with his double to centerfield in the eighth. The Rockets increased their lead to ten in the top of the ninth with a three-run home run by Hoying, 17-7. Jake Oester then doubled down the left field line to add another run for Toledo. Chris Dudics, who pinch hit for Johnson, hit a single to centerfield to put another run on the board. Toledo recorded five runs on six hits in the inning to take a 19-7 lead. Steven Watson singled in his first appearance of the season to score Hunter Dawson from second base, 19-8 in the bottom of the ninth inning. Middle Tennessee will be back in action on Tuesday, March 4 when it travels to Carbondale, Ill., to face Southern Illinois at 2 p.m. Due to predicted weather conditions in both the Carbondale, Ill., and Murfreesboro area the schedule for this two-game series may change. All changes to scheduled games will be posted on www.goblueraiders as soon as they are available.

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