

Raiders End Season with 5-0 Loss

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ATHENS, Ga. - Birmingham Southern's David Horne scattered five hits in a complete-game shutout and the third-seeded Panthers turned four double plays and enough clutch hits to defeat fourth-seeded Middle Tennessee in an elimination game Saturday morning at Foley Field in the NCAA Athens Regional. Horne (8-3) walked two and struck out five, throwing 106 pitches total. He used the doubleplay to get out of several jams, inducing three inning-ending twin-killings and four total as the Panthers (47-17) stayed alive in the double elimination tournament. Middle Tennessee (40-22) starter

John Williams (8-4) took the loss, allowing five runs on nine hits in 5.2 innings. The senior lefthander walked three and struck out two, struggling with getting ahead all day and thus tossing just over 100 pitches in less than six innings. The Blue Raiders stranded six in the contest and hit into doubleplays in the third, sixth, seventh and ninth innings, including twice with the bases loaded. The club managed just eight hits in two games in the regional and scored only two runs after averaging almost seven per contest this season. BSC took an early lead when Michael Cline lifted a ball into the breeze in rightcenter for his fourth home run of the year, just clearing the 365 sign for a 1-0 Panthers lead. Middle Tennessee looked to get on the board in the third, loading the bases when Troy Harp was hit, followed by a single from Eric McNamee and a walk to Chuck Akers. But Derek Phillips bounced into a 6-3 doubleplay, ending the threat and the inning with Birmingham Southern clinging to a 1-0 lead. The Blue Raiders had two on with one out in the fifth, with Jeff Beachum getting hit and Harp drawing a one-out walk. McNamee grounded into a fielder's choice before Akers lined out to end the inning. BSC extended the lead in their half of the fifth, getting a chopper up the middle from Michael Wydner to start and bunt single by Matt Bogue. One out later Jared Walker singled through the right side, with Bogue scoring from second on the play for a 2-0 Panthers lead. Williams got an inning-ending doubleplay from the next batter, but not before the damage was done. Middle Tennessee had another chance to get on the board in the sixth after a one-out double from Brett Carroll followed by an infield single by Nate Jagers. But Shane Kemp bounced into an inning-ending, 5-4-3 twin-killing, with Birmingham Southern holding onto the 2-0 advantage. The Panthers added to the lead again in the bottom of the inning, starting with a pair of singles from Ryan Griffith

and Adam Tucker. A bunt single moved the runners over but McNamee gunned down Griffith at the plate on a grounder for the second out. Williams left a pitch up to the next batter, Wydner, who singled to center for a 3-0 edge. After a walk to Bogue loaded the bases, the Blue Raiders went to the bullpen for Matt Scott, who allowed a double down the leftfield line to Cline for a 5-0 BSC lead. In the seventh Marcus Taylor, who earlier in the game made a nice sliding catch in foul territory to end an inning, singled up the middle with one out. But Harp ended the threat with another grounder, the third doubleplay of the contest for BSC. Jagers hit into the final two-ball of the game in the ninth after Carroll was hit to start the inning. The Blue Raiders end the season 40-22, winners of 13 of their final 18 contests. **GAME NOTES**

Middle Tennessee is 0-7 in its last seven NCAA regional games. The last win for the Blue Raiders in postseason play came versus Illinois on May 27, 2000, at the Clemson Regional.

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