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## MT Softball falls 3-2 to FIU in opening round Will play Western Kentucky on Thursday at 12:30 PM

David Powell

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TROY, Ala. - Middle Tennessee scored first but left seven runners on base, as the fifth-seeded Blue Raiders (22-30) fell 3-2 to the fourth-seeded Florida International Golden Panthers (29-32) in the first round of the double-elimination Sun Belt Conference Tournament at Troy Softball Complex Wednesday.

Blue Raider starter **Lindsey Vander Lugt** (16-21) picked up the complete game loss, despite giving up just three runs on five hits, while striking two and walking none, in 7.0 innings.

Holly Satterfield (10-8) got the win for the Golden Panthers. The Hixson, Tenn. native gave up two runs on five hits, while striking out six and walking four, in the complete game outing.

Middle Tennessee jumped out to an early 1-0 lead in the top of the 1st inning. **Ashley Cline** led off with a single through the middle before stealing her team-leading 15th base of the season. **Corrie Abel** walked and **Justine Cerda** beat out a slow roller to the shortstop to load the bases with no outs. **Martha Davis**, the team's leading power hitter, showed her versatility by laying down a RBI sacrifice bunt to score Cline.

Cline went two-for-three with a run scored for the Blue Raiders.

Florida International used timely hitting to take a 3-1 lead in their half of the 1st inning. Desiree Fink singled to through the left side and advanced to second base on a sacrifice bunt by Katie Bell. After advancing to third base on a Vander Lugt wild pitched, she scored when Monique White hit a RBI double to left centerfield. Later in the inning, Jessica Landau hit a two-out, two RBI single to right field to put FIU ahead by two runs.

The Blue Raiders pulled a run back in the top of the 3rd inning after Abel's third triple of the season. The Sophomore led things off with the three-base hit over the head of FIU centerfielder Kim Rodriguez, before scoring when Cerda nailed a RBI single to left field.


Cerda was 2-for-3 with a RBI to lead the Blue Raider offense.

Middle Tennessee's best chance to tie the game came in the top of the 6th inning. **Caitlin McLure** walked and then stole second base to put a runner in scoring position. With two outs, shortstop Brittney Banania struck out looking to end the inning.

The Blue Raiders continue in Sun Belt Tournament play at 12:30 PM on Thursday against the Western Kentucky Hilltoppers.

The Sun Belt Conference is offering fans the opportunity to watch all tournament games



Senior Ashley Cline extended her season-high hitting streak to ten games in the loss. The Blue Raiders have one more chance to continue playing in the tournament, Thursday at 12:30 against Western Kentucky. (MT) 

leading up to the championship via live webstreaming. Fans can purchase this option by visiting [www.sunbeltsports.org](http://www.sunbeltsports.org). The cost of the stream is \$9.95. In addition, live statistics are available by following the links on [GoBlueRaiders.com](http://GoBlueRaiders.com).

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