Blue Raiders fall 3-1 to East Carolina

Conclude ECU Invitational on Sunday

February 7, 2009 · David Powell

GREENVILLE, N.C.- Middle Tennessee (0-2) took an early lead but could not hold on as they dropped a hard-fought 3-1 decision to host East Carolina (2-0) at the East Carolina Invitational on Saturday afternoon. Middle Tennessee fell 6-3 to Virginia earlier in the day. Toby Joy had a fine performance in her first collegiate game, going 2-for-3 with a run scored and RBI. The Blue Raiders outscored the Cavaliers three to zero in the final three innings but could not overcome the already large deficit. Caty Jutson (0-1) had a strong debut for the Blue Raiders, giving up three runs on six hits, while striking out five and walking one in the complete game outing. Caitlin Wainright (1-0) picked up the win for the Pirates, pitching a three-hit shutout. She struck out four and walked one in four innings of relief. Brooke Swann got the start for the home team but was pulled after giving up a run and four hits, while walking for batters in two innings of action. Toni Paisley picked up her first save of the season for the Pirates. The Blue Raiders threatened first in the opening frame. Sophomore Brittney Banania led off the game with a hard slapper up the middle. Shelby Barrett drew a two-out walk to put two runners on base, but Jutson struck out looking to end the inning. Middle Tennessee capitalized off a bases-loaded opportunity to take an early 1-0 lead in the bottom of the second inning. Kesley Dortch smacked a single to the left side and stole second base before Joy singled up the middle to put runners on the corners. Corrie Abel walked to load the bases and Banania held back on a 3-2 pitch to push Dortch across the plate for the first run of the ballgame. Dortch finished the first day of the invitational going a combined 4-for-7 with a run scored. East Carolina tied the game at one run apiece in the bottom of the second inning off a Kaui Tom RBI single through the middle. The Pirates

took a 3-1 lead in the bottom of the third inning when ECU designated player Angel Barrella hit a bloop single just out of the reach of a diving Banania near the third base line. In the fourth inning, Caitlin McLure blasted a two-out single through the middle and advanced to third on a stolen base and an error, but Banania grounded out to the shortstop to end the frame. McLure went 2-for-3 for the Blue Raiders. The Blue Raiders last opportunity to cut into the ECU lead came in the final inning. McLure led off the inning with a single up the middle but Martha Davis struck out looking two batters later to end the contest. Middle Tennessee concludes play in the ECU Invitational against Virginia and East Carolina on Sunday. Opening pitch for the first game is set for 10 a.m. ET.

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