Blue Raider Softball Places Third at Eagle Classic

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STATESBORO, Ga. - Middle Tennessee softball (2-3) went 2-1 on Saturday at the Georgia Southern Eagle Classic to place third at the tournament.

The tournament was scheduled to last three days but the threat of inclement weather on Sunday forced tournament officials to shorten the tournament. The Blue Raiders played three consecutive games.

Game 1: Middle Tennessee 11, St. Francis 0

Middle Tennessee won its first game of the season in a slugfest against St. Francis. The Blue Raiders had 13 hits in the game and scored in four of the five innings played.

Sophomore Christi Benton picked up her first hit as a Blue Raider to start a Middle Tennessee scoring frenzy in the second inning. Benton was called out at second on a fielder's choice that put Trish White on first base and White advanced to second on a Brandi Boehner single.

White scored the first run of the inning for the Blue Raiders on an RBI single by senior Jennifer Grybash. With the bases loaded and one out, freshman Kristine Reed logged in her first hit in a Middle Tennessee uniform with a two RBI single that plated Boehner and Grybash.

The Blue Raiders tacked on four more runs in the top of the third. Liz Davis reached first on an error by the right fielder and advanced to second, she scored when Benton picked up her second hit of the game and first RBI of her career. With the bases loaded St. Francis hurler Jeanine Gargiulo walked in White for the second run of the inning. Jennifer Dorais hit a two RBI single to score Grybash and Jessica Boyce.

Middle Tennessee scored three more runs in the top of the fourth inning. Leah Grothause and Davis started the inning with back-to-back singles and Grothause scored off a sacrifice fly by Benton. An error by the Red Flash shortstop sent Davis home for the second run of the inning. The Blue Raiders

manufactured the third run of the inning when Grybash stole first with Boehner on third. While Grybash was stealing second, Boehner advanced home on the throw.

Davis added yet another run for the Blue Raiders in the top of the fifth after Dorais reached on a single. Davis launched a single into centerfield, which plated Dorais.

Senior hurler Crystal Bobo picked up her first win of the season, improving to 1-1 in a shutout performance. In five innings of work, she allowed four hits and struck out three.

The Blue Raiders had five players with multiple hits. Dorais, Grothause and Davis each went 2-for-4 in the game. Reed led the team with three RBI.

Game 2: Morehead State 1, Middle Tennessee 0

Middle Tennessee dropped a heartbreaker against Morehead State in bracket play. With the game scoreless in the bottom of the seventh inning, and two outs, Eagles left fielder Jessie Chinn hit a homerun over the left field wall for the win.

The Blue Raiders threatened to take the game in the top of the seventh with bases loaded and two outs. Kayla Sparks hit a hot shot to third base, but it was snagged and White was out on the force play.

Freshman hurler Ashley Katinas tossed the complete game for the Blue Raiders and took the loss. In just her third appearance in a Middle Tennessee uniform, she showed flashes of brilliance in the loss. Overall, Katinas went seven innings, allowing five hits, one run, walking two and striking out six.

Davis led the Blue Raiders at the plate going 2-for-3. Grybash, Grothause and White also notched hits for Middle Tennessee.

Game 3: Middle Tennessee 4, St. Francis 0

Middle Tennessee got on the board in the bottom of the second thanks to a little trickery. With Davis on second base, White hit a single between shortstop and second base. Davis advanced to third and White made it appear she was heading to second base. With the St. Francis infield concerned with White, Davis headed home for the first score of the game.

Kayla Sparks hit the first double and RBI of her career in the bottom of the fifth inning. She crushed the ball to left centerfield to send home White. After advancing to third on a passed ball, Sparks scored off an RBI single by Grybash for the second run of the inning.

St. Francis threatened in the top of the sixth inning. After three consecutive singles loaded the bases, Bobo forced three pop ups to end the inning.

In the bottom of the sixth, Middle Tennessee scored its fourth run of the game off a double steal. With Reed at third and Davis at first, Davis stole second and Reed took off at third to score on a close play at the plate.

Bobo tossed her second consecutive complete game and improved to 2-1 on the year with the win over St. Francis. She allowed six hits, one walk and struck out three.

White led the Blue Raiders going 2-for-2 with a run scored. Davis also had a big game going 2-for-3 with a run scored.

Middle Tennessee returns to action on Wednesday when the Blue Raiders travel to Nashville to take on instate rival Lipscomb. Game time is set for 1 p.m.

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