Benton's RBI Double Lifts Blue Raiders to Win over Mississippi State

March 17, 2005 · MT Media Relations

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Christi Benton's RBI double in the bottom of the seventh inning assured Middle Tennessee softball (4-14) a 6-5 win over Mississippi State (18-12) Thursday at Blue Raider Field. The Bulldogs took game one 8-0.

"The game was just a battle of wills," said Head Coach Leigh Podlesny. "Beating a team like Mississippi State carries over to your next games. I think today was a real turn for the team."

The Blue Raiders entered the bottom of the seventh trailing 5-2 and were down to just two outs after Candis Littrell lined out to right field. Senior right fielder Jennifer Grybash started the Middle Tennessee rally with a double to right field. Leah Grothause's single advanced Grybash to third and Grybash scored off an RBI single by Melissa Weiland.

With runners on first and second, Mississippi State made a pitching change, replacing relief pitcher Sara Hickerson with Melissa Massey, who tossed the first game. Massey walked Liz Davis to load the bases and Middle Tennessee made the Bulldog pitcher pay. Sophomore Trish White launched a liner to the outfield to plate pinch runner Michelle Wilkes and Grothause to tie the game at five.

The tie set up a chance for the Blue Raiders to take the game, working with just one out. Sophomore Christi Benton stepped into the box with the opportunity to snap an 11 game losing streak for her team, and she took her opportunity to the wall. Benton, who saw very little action as a freshman,

pounded a double to left centerfield to score Davis and secure the win for Middle Tennessee.

"Stepping up to the plate I was really nervous," Benton said. "Coach [Leigh] Podlesny called me over and calmed me down, and I just stepped up to the plate and told myself I could do this, because we needed it."

Freshman hurler Ashley Katinas earned her first win as a Blue Raider with the Middle Tennessee win. After giving up eight runs to Mississippi State in the first game, Katinas seemed to buckle down in the second game.

Katinas held the Bulldogs scoreless in the first inning and gave up a run in the second inning. Mississippi State tacked on another run in the top of the fourth and two more in the top of the fifth.

Although Middle Tennessee was down 4-0 in the bottom of the fifth, the Blue Raiders just kept plugging away. After Brandi Boehner doubled and advanced to second on a ground out by Candis Littrell, she scored the first Middle Tennessee run on an RBI single by Grybash.

Mississippi State got the run back when the Bulldogs scored a run in the top of the sixth and led 5-1. Middle Tennessee tacked on its second run of the game when Boehner doubled for the second time in the game to score White.

"I am really happy with the win," Katinas said. "First I was excited that we won and then I realized it was my first win here as a pitcher and that was great. But first and foremost it was all about the win for the team."

Katinas ended the game allowing five runs, four earned, on eight hits and struck out three. In the first game she allowed eight runs on nine hits in five innings.

Grybash led the Blue Raiders in the first game going 2-for-2. In the second game, Boehner was a perfect 3-for-3 with two doubles, and an RBI. The win was the first at home for the Blue Raiders this season.

Middle Tennessee returns to action on Sunday with the Blue Raiders host Dayton. The first pitch is set for 12 p.m.

GAME NOTES: The win over Mississippi State snaps an 11-game losing streak for the Blue Raiders ... Ashley Katinas picked up her first win on the mound in a Blue Raider uniform, previously she had lost 11 consecutive decisions ... Freshman Jessica Boyce got the first hit of her career at Middle Tennessee in the first game against Mississippi State ... The win over Mississippi State is the first victory over an SEC opponent for the Blue Raiders since 2002 when the team defeated Auburn 9-3 ... Christi Benton's double was the first of her career.

Printed on December 9, 2013
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/3813