Blue Raiders clinch series against FAU

Timely hitting powers MT to 5-2 win

April 26, 2009 · David Powell

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Junior pitcher Lindsey Vander Lugt started her third-straight game and Middle Tennessee scored four runs in the sixth inning as the Blue Raiders came from behind to clinch a series victory over Florida Atlantic with a 5-2 win at Blue Raider Field on Sunday afternoon. Middle Tennessee (13-31, 5-16 Sun Belt) split the opening two contests against the Owls (26-27, 9-12 Sun Belt) on Saturday. Vander Lugt (10-16) allowed just one earned run and scattered seven hits in the complete game victory. Kat Stauffer (6-4) gave up five runs on six hits in six-inning performance for the visiting team. Florida Atlantic capitalized off a Blue Raider error to take a 1-0 lead in the opening inning. Caitlyn Bliss singled to center field and scored a batter later off a fielding error at the warning track by leftfielder Caitlin McLure to put the Owls ahead. The Blue Raiders immediately evened the game in the bottom of the inning. McLure singled up the middle and put herself in scoring position with her 17th stolen base of the season before Kaycee Popham singled through the left side to make it 1-1. Middle Tennessee's defense came up big in the third inning. With runners at second and third, Kandra Singleton fielded a ball in right field, threw to Kaycee Popham, who in turn fired to catcher Natalie Ysais just in time to tag a sliding Ambar Jones at home plate. The Owls took a 2-1 lead in the top of the sixth inning. Blair Bodenmiller led off with a single to left field and scored two batters later off a Caitlyn Bliss RBI base hit through the left side. The Blue Raiders powered into the lead with four scores in the sixth inning. Ysais reached on Bukovich's second throwing error of the contest and Shelby Barrett got her first hit of the game at a crucial time with a two-base shot off the

wall in left center field to tie the game at two runs apiece. Later in the frame, Caty Jutson reached on a fielder's choice and Joy singled to the pitcher before Singleton reached on a fielding error by Owls first baseman Bliss. Brittney Banania scored on the play and Kelsey Dortch smashed a two-RBI single to center field during the next at bat to make it 5-2 in favor of the home team. With the win, Middle Tennessee needs a series sweep at rivals Western Kentucky next weekend and four losses by Louisiana-Monroe to qualify for the Sun Belt Conference Tournament. The Warhawks conclude their series at home to Florida International on Sunday afternoon before rounding out conference play against No. 20 Louisiana-Lafayette next weekend. Middle Tennessee finishes off play at Blue Raider Field with a non-conference doubleheader against Jacksonville State on Tuesday. Opening pitch is set for 1 p.m. A special thanks to Blue Raider marketing graduate assistant Brad Hutson, public address announcer Jeff Shipley and the rest of the softball support staff for all their hard work this season.

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