Blue Raiders rout rival Hilltoppers 10-4

Roberts and defense work together in opening game of series

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -Junior Kenneth Roberts and the Middle Tennessee defense worked together to pick up a 10-4 win over Sun Belt leading Western Kentucky Thursday night. Roberts (8-1) worked eight innings allowing one run on seven hits with five strikeouts while the Middle Tennessee (37-15, 20-8) defense was perfect with no errors in addition to posting five double plays. "Good defense is a pitcher's best friend. It was great for Kenny and he had an outstanding game. We had to match-up at the beginning of the game and we matched up great blowing through the first five innings," head coach Steve Peterson said. The Blue Raiders also performed well at the plate as sophomores Bryce Brentz and Tyler Burnett and seniors Rawley Bishop and Nathan Hines all had multiple hit nights. Brentz hit his 27th home run of the season on his way to a 3 for 4 night with one RBI and scored three runs.



"We swung the bat well and got hits in key situations. Brentz is having a great year and continues to do it day in and day out," Peterson said. Bishop went 2 for 5 with a double, home run, drove in two runs and scored two runs while Hines doubled, drove in a run and scored. Matt Hightower (6-2), who led the Sun Belt in pitching, took the loss as he allowed seven runs on 10 hits in six innings of work. The Hilltoppers used five pitchers in relief with Aaron Mayfield having the longest relief outing working one inning allowing one run on three hits. The Hilltoppers (37-15, 21-7) had 12 hits on the night with five of those coming in the ninth inning when they also scored their only runs in the game. Jeremy Coleman, Matt Rice and Hightower all had two hits in the game with Rice hitting a home run

and Hightower hitting a double to account for two of WKU's five extra base hits. Roberts allowed just one run in the game which came against the only batter he faced in the ninth as WKU's Wade Gaynor hit a solo home run to left. Bishop hit an inside the park home run in the fourth to put Middle Tennessee up by two as Brentz scored from second. The ball was hit to deep centerfield and Bishop turned it into a home run after the centerfielder ran into the wall and the ball rolled away from him, 2-0 MT. Brentz hit a solo shot to left in the fifth to increase the Blue Raider lead to three. Middle Tennessee hit back to back doubles in the bottom of the seventh to score two runs and take a 5-0 lead. The Blue Raiders added four more runs on a single to left and a double to right taking nine run lead. Middle Tennessee scored six runs on five hits to take a 9-0 lead. Western Kentucky hit two home runs in the ninth to get on the board and close the gap to seven, 10-3 MT. The Hilltoppers ended the inning scoring four runs on six hits. Middle Tennessee will play game two of the series with the Hilltoppers on Friday, May 15 at 6 p.m. "It is a good start for us in the series and I told the team headed in that the second game of the series is the most important. Tomorrow is the important game of the series because then it really puts emphasis on the series. The fans are seeing the top two teams in the conference battle for the regular season title," Peterson said.

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