Comeback Falls Short in 9-7 Loss

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee came from four runs down to tie the game in the eighth, but visiting New Orleans scored twice in the ninth to take a 9-7 victory and the series Saturday at Reese Smith Field. Middle Tennessee (12-13, 1-3 Sun Belt) was down 5-1 in the sixth and 7-4 heading into the bottom of the eighth before scoring three times to tie the game. But the Privateers (10-19, 6-2) would not go away and manufactured two runs in the ninth to win their second game of the series and sixth in their last seven league contests. Five Privateers - Josh Jones, Brandon Bowser, Mike Constantino, T.J. Baxter and Alex Webster - all collected two hits for the winners, with Baxter driving in three runs. Martin Vergara (1-5) worked 1.2 scoreless innings to get the win, striking out two batters in the eighth to stop the bleeding and allowing a leadoff double in the ninth. Middle Tennessee's Todd Martin was 4-for-5, including a game-tying double in the eighth, and Adam Warren tied his career-high with three hits in the contest, including a pair of doubles. Jimmy Kelly (0-2) suffered the loss, giving up two runs on three hits. The Blue Raiders scored in the first after a leadoff walk to Eric McNamee. UNO starter Bryan Cryer's pickoff throw got away, moving McNamee all the way to third, and Nate Jaggers' single up the middle made it 1-0 Blue Raiders. The Privateers took the lead in the fourth on one swing of the bat after a one-out single by Paul Smyth and a two-run homer to dead centerfield from Baxter. A one-out double by Nate Murray set up UNO's third run, with a two-out single to center by Bowser scoring Murray. The Privateers added two runs in the sixth, one on a run-scoring double from Webster and another on a sacrifice fly to center by Tony Gonzalez for a 5-1 UNO advantage. Marcus Taylor's leadoff double in the sixth set up Michael McKenry's two-run homer down the leftfield line, his sixth of the season, cutting the deficit to 5-3. McNamee led off the seventh with another walk and went to third on a single from Martin. After a stolen base by Martin put runners at second and third with no one out, Jaggers popped out before an RBI groundout by Taylor. Jeff Beachum's fielder's choice ended the inning with the Blue Raiders scoring just one run and still trailing by a run. But the Privateers added two runs in the top of the eighth on two hits and a Blue Raider error. Constantino singled to lead off and Smyth hit a tailor-made doubleplay ball, but Jaggers throw to second went right past McNamee and into rightfield. A wild pitch put runners on

second and third before a two-run chopper through the left side by pinch-hitter Miles Cabeceiras gave UNO a 7-4 lead. The Blue Raiders tied the game in the eighth with three runs against UNO stopper Grant Birely. Warren led off with a single and Josh Archer reached on a wild pitch after striking out. McNamee plated both runners with a double down the leftfield line, and Martin's double over the centerfielder's head knotted the score at seven. But UNO came right back again to score twice in the top of the ninth and take the lead. Jones and Bowser both singled to start and Ryan Meyer was hit to load the bases. A sacrifice fly from Smyth plated a run and Baxter's RBI groundout scored the final run of the contest. Cryer allowed three runs on seven hits in six innings, while Blue Raider starter Eric Blevins gave up five runs on eight hits, also in six innings. Both bullpens gave up four runs, while both teams committed a pair of errors. The two teams conclude the series Sunday at 1 p.m. **GAME NOTE**

Nate Jaggers extended his hitting streak to nine games, matching a high from earlier this season, with a single in the first ... Todd Martin's seven-game hitting streak came to an end Friday night, but the junior started a new one with four hits in Saturday's contest. His double in the eighth was the first extra-base hit by the junior in nine games ... Josh Archer's seven-game hitting streak and Nathan Hines' six-game hitting streak both came to an end with 0-for-4 performances.

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