Vander Lugt shuts down Jaguars

17.0 innings, 19 K's and two wins on the day for the senior

March 27, 2010 · Christian Lemon

MOBILE, Ala. - Lindsey Vander Lugt threw 17.0 winning innings in two games as the Blue Raider softball team evened their season record at 10-10 after winning both games of the Saturday doubleheader against South Alabama on Saturday. The Blue Raiders stand 2-3 in Sun Belt play after taking a 2-0 win in the first contest and grabbing a 7-3 decision in the nightcap.

It marks the first time since 2007 the Raiders have had a .500 record this deep into the season. It is also the first time Middle Tennessee has won a series versus South Alabama. A Blue Raider win on Sunday would be the first program conference series sweep since 2004 when the team took four straight against then SBC foe New Mexico State.

"Our girls are getting more confident which is helping us get wins in tight games," said Head Coach Sue Nevar. "We know we have to play our best to be good in this league. Getting over the .500 mark is our goal."

For the day, Vander Lugt threw 17.0 innings, striking out 19 batters while allowing one walk and three runs. All runs came in the second game. She would finish the day with a season ERA of 1.98.

In the first game, Vander Lugt pitched 8.1 no-hit innings to lead the Blue Raiders to their first conference victory of the 2010 season as the Blue Raiders topped the South Alabama Jaguars 2-0.

Middle Tennessee scored two runs off eight hits while allowing one error to move to 9-10 overall

after the first game.

Vander Lugt threw 10.0 total scoreless innings in game one, striking out 11. The Jaguars broke up Vander Lugt's no-hitter in the ninth on a lazy fly ball to left field. The eleven strikeouts ties a career high. The Olympia, Wash. native is currently riding a seven game winning streak and had not allowed a run in 25.0 straight frames after the first game. She also set a new MT record for innings pitched with 795 for her career passing Jennifer Martinez' mark of 787.

In the 10th, the Blue Raider bats finally gave Vander Lugt the needed run support to get the victory. Jessica Ives scored the winning run as Brittney Banania dropped a bunt to execute a textbook squeeze play. Banania has eight RBIs for the season. Kaycee Popham would add an insurance run driven in by Kelsey Dortch. Popham had two hits for the game.

Vander Lugt commented on her success, "It is awesome to set the school innings pitched record. That was a big reason I chose MTSU because I wanted the opportunity to get a lot of time as a freshman and sophomore. It prepared me for days like today when I would throw 17 straight."

In the first inning, Caitlin McLure stole second giving her 15 stolen bags on the season. It tied her with Allison Cheatham for second most steals in a Blue Raider career with 60.

The Blue Raiders experienced better success in the second game as they tallied seven runs off 12 hits and did not commit an error.

"We didn't let ourselves get down in between games," said Nevar. "We did not hit particularly well in the first game. USA's Amy Pilgrim was really strong against us. She has a great curve and we might not have adjusted as well as we could have, but I am proud of how we came out swinging in the second game."

Vander Lugt struck out eight batters and allowed three runs off of seven hits in game two.

Corrie Abel was the leading hitter in the second contest going 3-4 with three RBIs. She leads the team with 20 hits and an average of .294. Natalie Ysais and Jessica Ives each notched two hits and an RBI.

The Blue Raiders will play for their first winning record in three seasons and first Sun Belt regular season series sweep in six seasons Sunday. The team will conclude their conference set against South Alabama at 1 p.m. Live stats and full coverage will be available on GoBlueRaiders.com.

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