Softball sweeps doubleheader against WKU

Popham drives in four drives to send softball to post-season Tournament

May 8, 2010 · Christian Lemon

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. The Middle Tennessee softball team took care of business when it mattered the most, sweeping a Saturday conference doubleheader against the WKU Hilltoppers to climb into the final SBC tournament position. MT moves to 21-30 on the season, 7-17 in SBC play with WKU falling to 27-25 overall, 6-15 in conference.

Strong pitching from Lindsey Vander Lugt and the hot bat of Kaycee Popham, were the keys to victory in the senior day finale. Vander Lugt earned her eighth shutout of the season in the first game and Popham drove in four runs on the day.

The two game sweep moves Middle Tennessee into the eighth and final qualifying spot in next week's conference tournament.

The Blue Raiders played error free softball in the first game scoring eight runs off 13 hits. MT left 10 runners on base.

Popham scored the first run of the game in the second inning on a Corrie Abel sacrifice fly to centerfield. Later in the third, Popham drove in Kandra Singleton to the give the team a two-run lead. Brittney Banania singled the next at bat to plate Jessica Ives improving the Blue Raiders lead to 3-0 after three innings.

Popham continued to stroke the ball well when she knocked a two run double in the fourth to put the

game out of reach, 5-0.

Senior Caitlin McLure dropped a sacrifice bunt in the fifth to move the game to 6-0. Natalie Ysais blasted her fourth home run of the season to make it 7-0 in the sixth before McLure stole home to win in mercy rule fashion 8-0.

In the second game, Middle Tennessee's 11 runs came off 12 hits as the team gave up two errors and left five runners on base. The Lady Toppers scored three runs on nine hits with no errors and seven runners left on base.

WKU scored first in the game after the first three batters recorded hits. The Hilltoppers led 1-0 after one inning.

The Blue Raiders answered in the second as Brittney Banania dropped a suicide bunt to score Popham. Abel later doubled to plate Jessi Couch and give Middle Tennessee a 2-1 lead after two.

Middle Tennessee had their biggest inning of the season in the third, batting through the order scoring nine runs off eight Blue Raider hits. Jessica Ives had of the two hits and Corrie Abel drove in two runs in the inning. At the end of the third, the Blue Raiders held a comfortable 11-1 lead.

The Hilltoppers added one run in the fourth and one in the fifth to make the final score 11-3 in a five inning mercy rule affair. This is just the fourth time all season the Blue Raiders have won when the opposing team scores the first run of the game.

The Middle Tennessee softball team will travel to Mobile, Ala., to compete in the Sun Belt Conference tournament where they will likely face the Louisiana Ragin' Cajuns'. Full results and coverage will be available on GoBlueRaiders.com.

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