Blue Raiders fall 12-7 to Tennessee

Six of seven hits in game for extra bases

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KNOXVILLE, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee took an early lead against Tennessee on Wednesday night but unlike the night before could not get enough runners on base in a 12-7 loss. The long ball was key in the game with Tennessee as there were eight home runs between the two schools. Middle Tennessee hit four led by sophomore Justin Guidry who hit two and ended the night 2 for 4 with three RBI. "We didn't get enough runners on base and we really needed to slug with them tonight. I went into this game thinking it was going to be like last night against Tennessee Tech but we could not match them hit for hit like we did in that game," head coach Steve Peterson said. It was good to see Guidry start swinging the ball well. Coach McGuire spent some time with him today watching film from last and going over what he needed to work on. It really showed today at the plate." The Blue Raiders had seven hits in the game and six were for extra bases. Junior Justin Miller hit one of the team's four home runs as he went 2 for 3 with a walk and scored three runs in his native city of Knoxville. Senior Drew Robertson also had two hits on the night going 2 for 2 with two RBI, a home run and a double. Junior Will Skinner was the only other Blue Raider to record a hit as his only one in the game was a home run. Middle Tennessee used six pitchers in the game with freshman Daniel Palo taking the loss. Palo received the start working 3.2 innings allowing four runs on four hits as he fell to 1-2 on the season. "Palo pitched well the first three innings and it was very typical of him and really show how important maturity is on the mound. In those first three innings he was very electric getting into the upper 80s and low 90s," Peterson said. Junior Bryce Brentz pulled double duty on the night playing right field until the eighth inning when he moved to the mound for his first appearance of the season. Brentz worked one inning allowing no hits or runs and struck out one batter while going 0 for 2 at the plate with a walk and hit by pitch. Senior Kevin

Whittaker worked 1.1 innings allowing three runs on four hits while junior Nick Montgomery worked one inning allowing one run, unearned, on three hits in the other two longest outings by Blue Raider pitchers. Tennessee recorded 14 hits, six for extra bases, on the night with P.J. Polk guiding the way. Polk went 1 for 3 at the plate but reach twice on walks and scored three runs. Charley Thurber led the team in hits with three which included a home run while Blake Forsythe drove in three runs. "Tennessee is playing and pitching really well right now but I have to give a lot of credit to P.J. Polk. P.J. was a one-man wrecking crew against us tonight and has really turned into a patient hitter and really started the ball rolling for them tonight," Peterson said. An RBI double by Skinner to deep right field gave the Blue Raiders an early 1-0 lead. Skinner then reached third on a wild pitch and scored on a sacrifice fly by Robertson making it 2-0 in favor of Middle Tennessee. Miller hit his 18th home run of the season to lead off the fourth inning and extend the lead to three. Tennessee tied the game at 3 with one swing of the bat as Forsythe hit a three-run shot to left center with no outs after the first two batters received walks to reach base. Then Thurber gave the Vols the lead with his one out home run to left field, 4-3. Tennessee took the lead in the fourth after scoring four runs on two hits. In the fifth inning, Tennessee added three runs on four hits taking a 7-3 lead. Guidry, who had not recorded a hit in 13 at-bats, hit a two-run home run down the right field line in the sixth to close the Volunteer lead to two, 7-5. Robertson cut that lead to one, 7-6 with his first home run of the season. Tennessee answered quickly in the bottom of the sixth as Fritts hit a two-run homer to left center extending the lead back to three, 9-6. The Vols weren't done as Hawn hit a two-run home run of his own extending the lead to five, 11-6. Tennessee ended the Sixth scoring four runs on three hits. The Vols added a run in the seventh but Guidry's solo home run to centerfield in the eighth kept the Tennessee lead at five, 12-7. Middle Tennessee returns to Reese Smith Jr. Field for a three-game weekend series with New Orleans beginning on Friday, May 14 at 6 p.m. It is the final home games of the season for the Blue Raiders as they will honor their seniors in a pre-game ceremony on Saturday, May 15 before the schedule 4 p.m. first pitch. Middle Tennessee will wrap-up its three-game series with the Privateers at 1 p.m. on Sunday, May 16.

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