

Blue Raiders fall 15-5 to rival Western Kentucky

Skinner drives in two runs for Middle Tennessee

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BOWLING GREEN, Ky. -

Poor pitching a defense doomed the Blue Raiders in a 15-5 loss at Western Kentucky on Saturday night. The Hilltoppers run-ruled Middle Tennessee since they were leading at the end of seven innings. The Blue Raiders' pitching staff allowed 15 runs, 10 earned, on 12 hits in the loss while walking seven batters and hitting two. Middle Tennessee used six pitchers with junior Eric Gilley receiving the start. He worked 3.1 innings allowing five runs on four hits. Freshman Daniel Palo took the loss as he allowed four runs on two hits. "It was a whipping and kind of got embarrassing in the 4th. We couldn't throw strikes and play defense. I have to commend their starter, he pitched really well and then their reliever performed well too. They just outplayed us all



the way around," head coach Steve Peterson said. "A loss is a loss is a loss. You always hate to play a game after a loss. I know I'd rather play a team that's lost than a team that's won. I have confidence my team is going come back and play well but our pitching has to be better." Middle Tennessee's defense committed four errors in the game compared to Western Kentucky's one which proved to be an important factor. Senior Zach Hudson, junior Tyler Burnett and sophomore Justin Guidry each had two hits in the game as the Blue Raiders had nine total. Junior Will Skinner hit a two-run home run to begin the scoring as he went 1 for 3. Payton scored the first run for the Hilltoppers after Rice hit into a fielder's choice giving them an early 1-0 lead. In the top of the second, Skinner hit the first home run by either team in the series to hand the Blue Raiders a 2-0 lead. Middle Tennessee added another run after a double down the right field line scored Burnett

from first. The Blue Raiders ended the inning scoring five runs on six hits to take a 5-1 lead. The Hilltoppers added a run in the fourth after a sacrifice fly by Crabtree allowed Huck to score from third. With the bases loaded, Palo walked his first batter to bring in a run. Then Carter singled up the middle bringing in two more runs and tying the game at 5. It did not end there as a two-error play by Lawrence allowed a run to score and then a single drove in another run. Huck then hit a three-run home run to break open the game for Western Kentucky, 10-5. The Hilltoppers ended the inning scoring nine runs on five hits to take the 10-5 lead in the fourth. Western Kentucky added another run in the fifth after a misplayed ball by Brentz in right allowed Payton to score from second. The Hilltoppers extended their lead to eight, 13-5, after scoring three runs on one hit. The Hilltoppers scored two more in the sixth on three hits to make it a 10-run game. Middle Tennessee will be back in action next week as it is hosting the 2010 Sun Belt Championships which begin on Wednesday, May 26. The official bracket will be announced on Sunday, May 23 but the Blue Raiders have locked up the No. 3 seed when play begins on Wednesday, May 26. Middle Tennessee gets to choose their game time as the host school and has selected the 7:30 p.m. game. Check goblueraiders.com on Sunday for the official game time and opponent the Blue Raiders will face when tournament play opens. The Sun Belt and Middle Tennessee will host Family Night on Tuesday, May 25 which is open to the public with gates opening at 6:30 p.m. The event which will be held at Reese Smith Jr. Field will include an awards ceremony, home run derby and fireworks show. All session booklets for the tournament are \$75 and may be purchased through the Middle Tennessee Ticket Office. Visit the Sun Belt Tournament central page on goblueraiders.com for complete information on the Sun Belt Championships.

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