Blue Raiders under perform in opening round of SBC tourney

Skinner leads team at the plate

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - After beginning the game three-hours and forty-seven minutes after the original start time the Blue Raiders fell 15-4 in their opening game of the 2010 Sun Belt Championships. Middle Tennessee fell behind early and though it cut the lead to three twice Troy broke open the game with an eight-run eighth inning and activated the 10-run rule. It is the second straight game the Blue Raiders have been run-ruled and the last time they lost an opening round game in conference tournament was in 2008. "We've been that way the last two or three games, so we are going thru a bad spell, at a bad time. Tomorrow we are going against a team (UL-Lafayette) that has beaten us three times, and they have an outstanding pitcher (Zach Osborne) going against us," head coach Steve Peterson said. "But baseball has no mercy, and you have to battle back. We'll have to battle tomorrow, on short rest, and come out and see if we can turn this streak around." The Blue Raider pitching staff struggled with senior starter Kenneth Roberts worked 2.1 innings allowing six runs on six hits in the start before being pulled after Troy scored five runs in the third. Troy's Andrew Dickinson improved to 7-5 on the season after working seven innings allowing four runs on seven hits. "Early on, I didn't know if either starting pitcher was going to find it, but theirs did and ours didn't. They hit some solo home runs, they got some big hits," Peterson said. Senior Kevin Whittaker entered the game in relief working 4.2 innings allowing two runs on five hits and struck out five batters. "Kevin Whittaker came in and went probably as far as we have asked him to go, at least on pitch count. He was a warrior out there and kept it to where we had a chance, down to two or three

runs, but we couldn't get people on base, couldn't get something going," Peterson said. Offensively, the Blue Raiders were led by junior Will Skinner who went 2 for 3 with a home run, double, and two RBI. Troy's Ditthart and Watson hit first pitch home runs to lead off the second and third innings giving the Trojans a 2-0 lead. Then Ditthart hit a double to centerfield in the third bringing in two more Troy runs. Troy added two more extending its lead to five. The Blue Raiders put a run on the board in the fourth after Brentz scored on a single to right by Burnett. Then Skinner doubled down the left field line and Guidry hit a single to left driving in two more runs. Middle Tennessee cut the lead to three, 6-3, after notching five hits. Troy added another run in the fifth after a single by Watson, 7-3. Skinner hit a solo shot to left to put the Blue Raiders back within three runs, 7-4. The Blue Raiders will face UL-Lafayette at 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 27 in the loser's bracket of the Sun Belt Championships.

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