

# Blue Raiders fall 6-5 in SBC elimination game

## Gilley, Ford and Skinner guide team

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### MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Three newcomers were the key for the Blue Raiders as they battled against Troy before falling 6-5 on a walk-off home run in an elimination game at the Sun Belt Championships. Juniors Eric Gilley and Will Skinner along with freshman Ryan Ford posted outstanding performances in the loss.

Gilley worked seven innings allowing four runs on five hits to guide the Blue Raiders throughout the game. "A very good ball game. Eric (Gilley) pitched a very good game. I felt like I went with him as long as I could. Not that he wanted to come out, by any means. Nothing happened today that I haven't seen during the season," head coach Steve Peterson said. "Shaky is a nice word to describe our bullpen. We have to out-trick them and things like that because we don't have a closer per se. We weren't able to do it. The wild pitch was



huge, but really, all our relievers got hit pretty hard." Skinner and Ford combined for three RBI and scored three runs as each had a home run while Skinner's second hit was a double. Skinner went 2 for 4 while Ford was 1 for 4. Ford's home run was the first of his young career and handed Middle Tennessee a 4-2. It was an exciting part of the game, and I got to hit that one, but all in all, it's nothing when you don't get the win," Ford said. The Blue Raiders ended the season 35-23 after going 1-2 in the Sun Belt Championships with both of their losses coming to the Trojans. Middle Tennessee led 5-2 headed into the bottom of the eighth before Troy tied it a 5. "I felt like I did everything I could. I wish I could have saved something for another inning, but I was losing it. It was a good decision to pull me out. I was starting to throw balls, and in that situation, we needed strikes,"

Gilley said. "It's never a game in-hand, but I felt like Ryan's (Ford) home run gave me a second wind, and a little more confidence on the mound. It's never a game in-hand in college baseball. No lead is big enough." Troy's Steven Felix handed them the win with his home run to left center in the bottom of the ninth. The Blue Raiders played their first game as a visiting team in the 3rd base dugout during Friday's contest since the renovated Reese Smith Jr. Field was completed prior to the 2009 campaign. Junior Tyler Burnett also had two hits in the game as each team recorded nine hits with eight of them being for extra bases. The game was the final home contest for seniors Ben Darlington, Chad Edwards, Zach Hudson, Tyler Hyde, Justin Jones, Blake McDade, Stuart Meinhart, Kenneth Roberts, Drew Robertson, and Kevin Whittaker who all played a part in the Blue Raiders success including an NCAA Regional and Sun Belt Championship.

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