Blue Raider Softball Drops Two at War Eagle Classic

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AUBURN, Ala. - Middle Tennessee softball (0-3) dropped both its games in opening day action of the War Eagle Classic Friday at Auburn University. The Blue Raiders fell 9-5 to Mercer and then lost 5-2 to No.20 Auburn to close out the first day of action. The Blue Raiders opened the day against Mercer and jumped out to an early 3-0 lead over the Bears. Freshman Justine Cerda put Middle Tennessee on the scoreboard in the bottom of the third when she opened the inning with a walk, advanced to second on a sacrifice bunt by Jennifer Dorais and advanced to third on a ground out by Melissa Weiland. Cerda scored her first run as a Blue Raider when she stole home on a double steal which sent Trish White to second. Cerda struck again in the fourth inning, this time with her bat. After Katie Mielke scored the first run of the inning off an error, Cerda added the second run when she hit a double to left centerfield which scored Muriel Ledbetter. Mercer pulled within one run when the Bears scored two runs in the top of the fifth. Freshman pitcher Laura Moore gave up a two RBI single to Sarah Harding. The Bears tied the game in the sixth when Ashley Anderson scored an unearned run. Middle Tennessee took the lead again in the bottom of the sixth when the bases were loaded and White drew a walk scoring Mielke. Leading 4-3, the Blue Raiders' Ashley Katinas, who entered the game for Moore, gave up a solo homerun to Harding to lead off the seventh and force extra innings. The Blue Raiders surrendered five runs in the top of the eighth inning with the international tie-breaker rule was in place, which puts a runner on second to start the inning. Middle Tennessee did manage one run in the bottom of the eighth and again it was Cerda as she hit an RBI single to score Michelle Wilkes. Cerda ended the game 3-for-3 with two RBI and one run scored. Moore had two hits in the game and Mielke was 1-for-2 with two runs scored. Katinas took the loss and falls to 0-1 on the season. The Blue Raiders didn't have very much time to reflect on their heartbreaking loss as the club had to turn around and face No. 20 Auburn. White got the call to the mound for her first appearance of the season and went all six innings allowing five runs on nine hits and struck out three. She took the loss in the game. Scoreless after one and a half innings, Auburn

exploded for four runs in the bottom of the second inning. Middle Tennessee picked up one run in the third inning when Dorais led off the inning with a double and advanced to third off a sacrifice by Stiner. Dorais scored when Wilkes singled to left for her first RBI of the season. Auburn would tack on its fifth run of the game in the fifth to lead 5-1. Middle Tennessee scored its second run of the game in the top of the seventh. With two outs, Samantha Floyd singled to left field and then advanced to second on an Auburn error. Cerda's RBI singled plated Floyd. Middle Tennessee returns to action on Saturday at the War Eagle Classic. The Blue Raiders face Lipscomb at 10 a.m. and Jacksonville State at 2 p.m.

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