

Blue Raiders Sweep JSU

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Middle Tennessee's Jeff Beachum had five hits and scored four times and the Blue Raider pitching staff allowed just 13 hits in 16 innings of work, as Middle Tennessee swept a doubleheader at Jacksonville State on Sunday, 7-1 and 3-1.

Beachum and Michael McKenry each had three hits in the opener with Beachum scoring three times and McKenry driving in three runs in a 7-1 victory. Lefthander Tyler Copeland (1-0) allowed an unearned run on four hits in five innings of work to pick up the victory. Brett Reilley

worked three shutout innings and Tommy Sterritt pitched a perfect ninth to finish up and give the Blue Raiders (3-0) its first series win over the Gamecocks since 1999.

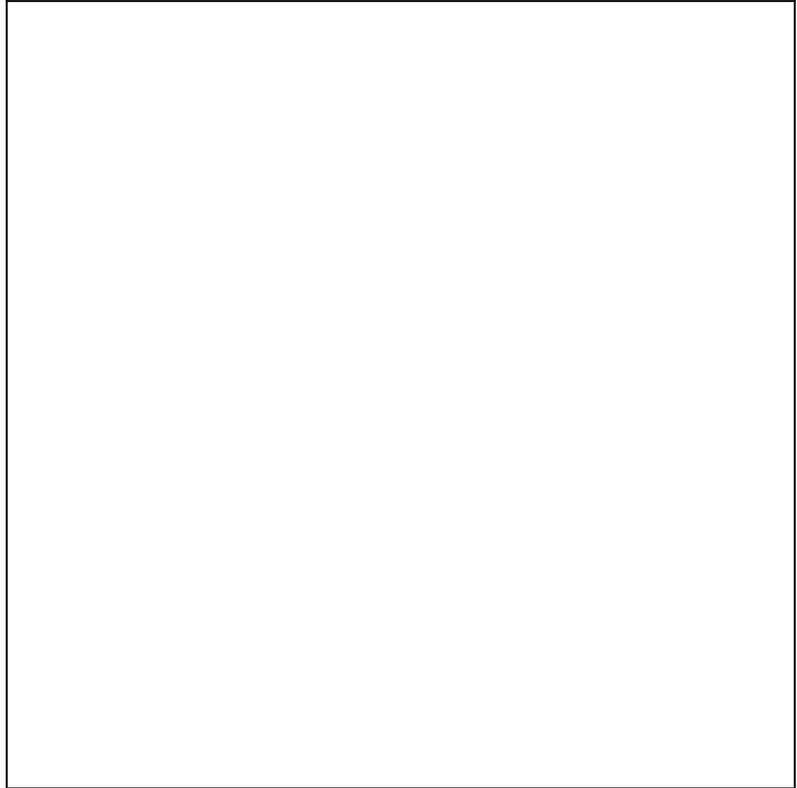
Beachum led off the game with a double, moved to third on a passed ball and scored on McKenry's infield single.

JSU scored its only run in the bottom of the first thanks to an error by third baseman Josh Horn. Nick Cleckler reached on the error to start the inning, went to second on a groundout, third on a wild pitch and scored on Eric Beck's single to leftfield.

The Blue Raiders scored once in the fifth when Horn doubled to leadoff and after a pitching change, Wayne Kendrick and Todd Martin walked to load the bases. McKenry's single to left plated the run for a 2-1 advantage.

In the sixth Middle Tennessee opened the cushion with a three-run inning. Rawley Bishop doubled with one out but was thrown out trying to stretch it to a triple. With two outs Horn and Beachum both walked. After another pitching change Kendrick tripled home both runners and Martin followed with an RBI single for a 5-1 advantage.

The Blue Raiders added single runs in the seventh and eighth. Chase Eakes walked with two outs in the seventh and pinch-runner Doug Birkofer stole second. Bishop then laced a double to left center



to score Birkofer.

In the eighth Beachum singled to rightfield to leadoff and Kendrick moved him over with a sacrifice bunt. McKenry's two-out triple to leftcenter made it a 7-1 game.

JSU starter Jon Clements (0-2) suffered the loss, allowed two runs on four hits in 4.1 innings of work.

In the second game, righthander Jeff Kasser worked 4.1 innings and two relievers tossed 2.2 shutout frames in a 3-1 triumph. Beachum added two more hits, scored a run and drove home another, as well.

Beachum singled to leadoff for the third straight game but was thrown out trying to steal. But Martin's solo homer to rightfield with two outs gave the Blue Raiders another early lead.

JSU again scored its only run in the bottom of the first after Jason Horn tripled to leadoff and Eric Beck plated the run with an RBI groundout.

Middle Tennessee scored the only other runs of the game in the third inning.

Horn singled to left center with one out and Beachum followed with an RBI double. Kendrick followed that with an RBI single to center for the 3-1 lead.

Kasser (1-0) gave up one run on four hits in 4.1 innings, but more importantly walked just one and struck out two. Lefthander Josh Anderson worked the next 1.2 innings, allowing just two hits and no runs before closer Allan Woodward picked up his first save of the year with a perfect inning, including two strikeouts.

"We threw the ball real well and [Jacksonville State] did too. All the way around the pitching was good in the whole series," head coach Steve Peterson said. "We got a few timely hits, some two-out hits, and came away with three wins.

"Wayne Kendrick was on base a lot and Jeff Beachum had a good series. Those two scored some runs. All three games it was different guys getting the big hits. They couldn't get the big hit and we got it, and that was the big difference in the series."

The Blue Raiders take on Belmont Tuesday at Greer Stadium in Nashville before hosting Missouri State in a three-game series next weekend at Reese Smith Field.

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