Blue Raiders Drop Another One, 8-3

March 8, 2006 · MT Media Relations

MEMPHIS, Tenn. - Joseph Lieberman and Ben Grisham both hit wind-blown home runs in the sixth inning and Memphis scored seven times in its final three at-bats, as the Tigers defeated Middle Tennessee, 8-3, Wednesday afternoon at Nat Buring Stadium. The Blue Raiders (4-5) took a 2-1 lead in the fourth with an unearned run, but the Tigers (8-3) scored three times in the sixth, two on Lieberman's two-run shot and then Grisham followed with a solo homer for a 4-2 lead. Memphis added a single run in the seventh and three more in the eighth, making a winner of UM starter Stephen Gostkowski (1-1), who allowed two runs on 10 hits and struck out seventh in 6.2 innings. Drew Jaudon worked 1.1 innings and Phillip Utley got the final three outs for the Tigers, who won their third straight overall. Kyle Norrid had three of Memphis' 15 hits in the contest, while Michael Murray, Bill Moss and Jordan Tolliver all added a pair of hits. Moss and Lieberman each drove in a pair of runs, as all but one starter in the lineup had a hit. The Blue Raiders collected 14 hits in the contest but stranded 13 runners, including two in the first, fourth, seventh and eighth innings. Middle Tennessee starter Shay Horseman worked five-plus innings, giving up two runs on seven hits while striking out five. Reliever Langdon Stanley (0-1) took the loss, allowing six runs on six hits in 2.1 innings of work. Michael McKenry tied his career-high with four hits in the loss for Middle Tennessee, the team's third in a row and fifth in six games. Chase Eakes added three hits and Jeff Beachum two hits and two RBIs. The Blue Raiders got on the board first in the game after a Doug Birkofer one-out single to leftfield. Birkofer stole second and scored on McKenry's two-out triple off the centerfield wall. The Tigers tied the game in the third when Alex Fennell singled to leadoff and went to second on a single from Murray. Both runners stole and a groundout by Moss plated Fennell to tie the game at one. Middle Tennessee's Rawley Bishop reached on a two-out throwing error by Murray in the fourth. Josh Horn followed with a single and Beachum then lifted a double down the leftfield line, scoring Bishop for a 2-1 advantage. Horseman worked his way out of a jam in the fifth after allowing a four-pitch to Fennell to leadoff. A sacrifice bunt moved the runner over and Murray's grounder found a hole between third and short, putting runners on the corners. But the lefthander got Moss looking and induced a groundout from Norrid to get out of the inning with a 2-1 edge. But the lead

was short-lived. Robbie Goss beat Horseman to the bag for an infield single to start the sixth, ending Horseman's day. Stanley allowed a wind-blown two-run homer down the leftfield line to Lieberman, giving Memphis a 3-2 lead. Grisham followed with another wind-blown job, this one to leftcenter, for a 4-2 Tigers advantage. The home team added another run in the seventh with back-to-back doubles from Tolliver, who entered the game as a defensive replacement in the seventh, and pinch-hitter Josh Irvin, giving the Tigers a 5-2 lead. The Blue Raiders cut into the lead in the eighth and had a chance for more after Eakes and Bishop both singled to start the frame. Both runners moved up on a passed ball, but Horn's screamer was backhanded by Murray at shortstop and Horn was thrown out at first. Beachum followed with a single to left, scoring pinch-runner Adam Warren, but pinch-hitter Alex Watson struck out swinging and Todd Martin struck out looking to end the inning with the Blue Raiders still trailing by two. Memphis added three more runs in the bottom of the inning after a one-out double to rightcenter from Will Petersen and a hit batter to Murray. Moss' long single off the wall in leftfield allowed Petersen to score just ahead of the throw, and Norrid's single past a drawn-in infield scored another run. Tolliver's single to left scored Norrid for an 8-3 Tigers lead. The two teams are scheduled to conclude the three-game series at 1 p.m. Thursday, but an 80 percent chance of rain in the area may play havoc with that schedule. Middle Tennessee heads to Carbondale, Ill., for a three-game series against Southern Illinois beginning Friday at 2 p.m. **GAME NOTES**

Sophomore Doug Birkofer made his first start of the season, hitting second and playing centerfield ... Shay Horseman made his first start on the mound since May 24, 2004, against Western Kentucky in the Sun Belt Championships ... Jeff Beachum's double in the fourth inning moved the senior past Kyle Thomas and into a tie for ninth with Marshall Nisbett (2001-02) for career two-baggers with 42. Beachum also singled in the eighth, moving past Chuck Akers (2001-04) and into fourth place on the career hits list with 239 ... Horseman went five-plus innings, his longest outing since April 28, 2004, when he worked five innings against Memphis ... Michael McKenry tied his career-high with four hits in the contest, including his second triple of the season ... Chase Eakes tied his career-high with three hits, all singles.

Printed on May 20, 2013
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/4943