

Scott, McKenry, Eakes Lead 9-0 Victory

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CARBONDALE, III. - Matt Scott tossed eight shutout innings and Michael McKenry and Chase Eakes drove in three runs in Middle Tennessee's 9-0 victory over Southern Illinois at Abe Martin Field on Friday.

The Blue Raiders (5-5) broke out of a hitting slump and ended a three-game losing streak in the process. Coming into the game, the squad had lost five of six overall, going 9-for-48 with runners in scoring position in the five defeats. In Friday's victory, the club was 6-for-17 with runners in scoring position, pounding out 14 hits in the contest.

Scott (2-1) allowed six hits and struck out six, working out of trouble in a pair of innings but otherwise dominating the Salukis (11-5). Only one

runner reached third base and just four made it as far as second. Jimmy Kelly allowed two hits in the ninth but got a doubleplay to preserve Middle Tennessee's first road shutout since May 9, 2004, at New Orleans.

"Location with the fastball like I used to was really the whole difference, in and out, up and down," Scott said. "After last week, it really brings you back to reality. I played with my mechanics some because I was having trouble locating.

"I think I was slacking with my mindset of attacking the hitters. Last week I was aiming instead of throwing. I made some adjustments and they really paid off today."

McKenry homered and doubled, driving in three runs, and Eakes drove in three with a single and a double. Wayne Kendrick scored three times and added a pair of hits, while Doug Birkofer, Jeff Beachum and Josh Horn all had two hits in the win.



SIU starter Jordan Powell (3-2) took the loss, allowing five runs on nine hits in 5.2 innings of work. The Blue Raiders scored twice against Kyle Catto and Cory Baker as well.

The Blue Raiders got on the board first with three straight singles in the fourth. Todd Martin singled sharply to center to leadoff and stole second. A chopper over the mound by Eakes put runners on the corners, and Marcus Taylor's single to right plated Martin for a 1-0 lead.

Scott worked around a leadoff double in the bottom of the inning by Hunter Harrigan, getting a strikeout, a groundout and a flyout to end the threat.

Middle Tennessee added two more runs in the fifth on three more hits, starting with a single down the rightfield line from Kendrick. Beachum followed with a walk and McKenry scored Kendrick with a double down the leftfield line. After a flyout, Eakes lined out to center, scoring Beachum for a 3-0 Blue Raiders advantage.

SIU got a single from Tyler Lairson and a bunt single from Scott Elmendorf in the bottom of the frame, but Scott sawed off three-hole hitter Grant Gerrard for the final out of the inning, holding on to the 3-0 edge.

The Blue Raiders kept the scoring going with four more runs in the sixth on four hits.

Horn doubled with one out and scored on Kendrick's two-out single through the middle, ending the day for Powell. Kendrick stole second and Beachum greeted Catto with a single on an 0-2 pitch, plating the run. McKenry then belted his second homer of the season over the leftfield wall, giving Middle Tennessee a 7-0 lead.

The Blue Raiders added two more runs in the eighth when Birkofer singled to leadoff and Kendrick followed with a walk. With two outs Martin walked and Eakes' double down the leftfield line scored a pair for a 9-0 advantage.

The two teams play again Saturday at 1 p.m. and conclude the three-game series Sunday at 1 p.m. The Blue Raiders will start lefthander Tyler Copeland (2-0, 1.64).

GAME NOTES

Redshirt freshman Michael McSweeney made his first career start, hitting seventh and playing first base ... Doug Birkofer played centerfield for the second straight game and hit leadoff for the first time in his career. It was also the first time this season someone other than Jeff Beachum batted in the leadoff spot ... Beachum extended his hitting streak to five games with a single in the first ... Jeff Beachum extended his hitting streak to five games with a single in the first ... Michael McKenry extended his hitting streak to five games with a double in the fifth ... Josh Horn extended his hitting streak to three games with a double in the sixth. Horn had two hits in the contest, his third straight two-hit game ... Birkofer went 2-for-6 in the contest, a career-high in at-bats and tied his career-high with two hits, his second career two-hit game and first since April 19, 2005, versus Memphis ... Chase Eakes tied his career-high with three RBIs, the third three-RBI game of his career and first since February 19, 2005, versus Ball State.