

Blue Raiders Err in 8-3 Loss

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. -

Birmingham Southern scored six unearned runs with the help of four Middle Tennessee errors and David Horne allowed just four hits in eight innings in the Panthers 8-3 victory Friday night at Striplin Field. Middle Tennessee (6-9) gave up three unearned runs in the third because of a throwing error by shortstop Jeff Beachum and then the wheels came off in the fourth with two more errors and five total runs, three unearned. With the run support Horne (2-2) settled down and retired the Blue Raiders much the same way he did two years ago at the NCAA Athens Regional.

The righthander gave up just five hits in that 5-0 victory and allowed only four on this evening, striking out six and walking just one. Horne gave up three runs, two earned, and retired 14 straight batters from the fourth to the eighth inning. John King struck out the side in the ninth to send Middle Tennessee to its ninth loss in 12 games. Scott Billak and Brett Ashley both had two hits for Birmingham Southern (8-8), while Mark Goforth and Matt Barber both scored twice. BSC recorded only seven hits in the contest but drove in five runs, using a squeeze and a sacrifice fly in the decisive fourth inning. Tyler Copeland (2-1) took the loss, allowing eight runs, two earned, on six hits in 3.1 innings. He walked two and struck out four. Wayne Kendrick gave the Blue Raiders a quick 1-0 lead with his first career homer, a solo shot to leftcenter in the top of the first. The Panthers scored three unearned runs in the third thanks for a throwing error from Beachum. Eric Farrell led off with a single and Ronny Woods moved the runner with a sacrifice. Goforth then hit a ground ball to Beachum, who tried to flip the ball to third base to get the runner, but the throw was wild and allowed Farrell to score. Barber singled home Goforth and after a strikeout, Blake Burton's double to center plated Barber for a 3-1 BSC lead. The Blue Raiders tied the game in the fourth after Michael McKenry's scorcher went through the legs of BSC first baseman Ashley and Todd Martin followed with his fifth home run of the season, a two-run shot to leftcenter. But in the bottom of the inning the wheels came off for Middle Tennessee, who committed a pair of errors and had two other chances to get outs and did not. Casey Bond walked to leadoff and Ashley followed with a double to leftcenter. An error by Blue Raider centerfielder Doug Birkofer allowed Bond to score on the play, and a groundout moved Ashley to third. Woods then squeezed home Ashley, with catcher McKenry trying

to grab the ball and tag the runner in the same motion but failing. Goforth then walked before Barber's grounder to second was booted by Kendrick, allowing a run to score. Billak's single to left plated Goforth and a grounder in the hole to Beachum from Burton turned into a fielder's choice when runners were safe at both first and second. A sacrifice fly from James Oliver scored Barber, giving the Panthers an 8-3 advantage and five runs on just two hits in the inning. Horne retired 14 in a row after Martin's home run until a Kendrick double with one out in the eighth. Kendrick had two of Middle Tennessee's four hits in the contest. Middle Tennessee and Birmingham Southern continue the series Saturday at 2 p.m. and conclude the three-game series at 1 p.m. Both games can be heard on 88.3 FM WMTS, with Jonathan Hutton providing the play-by-play. **GAME NOTES** Junior Matt Scott was scratched from his scheduled start Friday night because of injury. The righthander will likely not start this weekend and will be reevaluated next week ... Birmingham Southern suspended 10 players for the series, including four starters and scheduled Sunday starter Blake Martin ... BSC's scheduled starter, Brandon Hynick, was also scratched from his start after twisting his ankle in Wednesday's game at Alabama A&M ... Wayne Kendrick's home run in the first inning was the first round-tripper of his career. It also extended his hitting streak to six games ... Adam Warren's single in the second extended his hitting streak to four games ... Peter Mantzanis made his first career appearance, working two scoreless innings with two walks and a strikeout ... Josh Horn's seven-game hitting streak came to an end with an 0-for-2 performance and a walk.

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