Blue Raiders Drop a Pair of Close Ones at Louisville Tourney

March 25, 2006 · MT Media Relations

LOUISVILLE, Ky. - Middle Tennessee softball (7-22-1) fell to Eastern Michigan (8-14) 4-2 and No. 9 Michigan (16-9) 4-2 in the second day of the Louisville Classic at Ulmer Stadium.

Middle Tennessee struck first in the Blue Raiders match-up with Michigan. Katie Mielke got a free pass to first base when she was hit by Wolverine pitcher Jennie Ritter in the first inning. With two outs, junior Muriel Ledbetter hit her sixth homerun of the season over the left center field wall to give the Blue Raiders an early 2-0 lead.

Michigan quickly tied the game in its half of the first inning. Tiffany Haas led off the inning with a double and then moved to third when Alessandra Giampaolo singled to the left side. The Wolverines got their first run of the game when Samantha Findlay singled to score Haas. Michigan tied the game when Grace Leutele hit a single to score Findlay.

Michigan looked to pad their lead when the Wolverines had the bases loaded and just one out. Laura Moore, who had started the game on the mound for the Blue Raiders, was replaced by Samantha Floyd who forced Michigan into a double play to end the inning.

Floyd tossed three scoreless innings before Michigan broke the 2-2 tie. With one out, Haas started things off for the Wolverines when she doubled to centerfield. Giampaolo followed by drawing a walk to put runners at first and second. Floyd struck out Findlay for the second out of the inning and Middle Tennessee looked like it was in good shape to get out of the inning. Becky Marx had other plans as she doubled to score Haas and Giampaolo and give Michigan the lead. Floyd ended the Wolverine scoring when she forced Stephanie Barclaw to ground out for the final out of the inning.

Ledbetter looked to spark a rally for the Blue Raiders in the top of the seventh inning when she hit a lead-off double. With one out, Kristine Reed moved Ledbetter to third when she hit a bloop single behind second base. Back-to-back strikeouts by Ritter ended the Blue Raider rally.

Floyd takes the loss and falls to 0-3 on the season.

After two solid innings, a pair of Middle Tennessee miscues allowed Eastern Michigan to start a scoring rally in the third inning. With one out, Heather Giroux reached on an error, advanced to second and then moved to third on a second error by the Blue Raiders. A single by Ashley Straus plated the Eagles first run of the game. EMU tacked on two more runs before the inning ended. Moore started the game on the mound for the Blue Raiders and went 2.1 innings before she was replaced by Trish White.

Middle Tennessee started a rally of their own in the bottom of the fourth inning. With two outs, Justine Cerda was awarded first base when she was hit by Eastern Michigan pitcher Nikki Denman. It was the second time in the game Cerda had been hit by a pitch. With Cerda on first, it set up a scoring opportunity for junior Shelby Stiner and she took advantage, launching a homerun over the left field fence to pull the Blue Raiders within one run, 3-2.

Eastern Michigan tacked on one run in the sixth inning. Stephanie Sabo led off the inning with a single and after back-to-back sacrifice bunts that moved her to third, Sabo scored off an RBI single by Lauren Clark.

With one out, Middle Tennessee had one of its best scoring opportunities when Stiner picked up her third hit of the game, singling through the left side. Martha Davis beat out a bunt to place runners at first and second with just one out. The Blue Raiders failed to capitalize on the scoring opportunity as Mielke popped up to the second baseman and Floyd struck out.

In the seventh inning, White was replaced by sophomore hurler Ashley Katinas who held off the Eagles to give the Blue Raiders a chance to tie the game or take the lead in their half of the seventh. The plan looked to be working when Melissa Weiland reached first on an EMU error. Ledbetter followed with a double to place runners on second and third with no outs. Reed struck out and Jennifer Dorais popped up to the short stop for the first two outs of the inning.

However, Middle Tennessee was still alive when Cerda was hit by a pitch for the third time in the game. The Blue Raiders looked to be in great shape when Stiner came to bat with the bases loaded. The Peoria, Arizona native was a perfect 3-for-3 in the game including a homerun and two singles. However, the ball didn't fall her way as she hit the ball back to the pitcher for the third out of the inning.

Middle Tennessee faces Toledo Sunday in the final day of the Louisville Classic. First pitch is set for 9 a.m.

Printed on March 10, 2014
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/5021