Four-Run Eighth Does in Baseball

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Matt Garlington and Ryan Gotcher both had two-run doubles in a four-run eighth inning, breaking a tie game and sending Arkansas-Little Rock to a 5-2 victory over Middle Tennessee Saturday afternoon at Reese Smith Field. The visiting Trojans (18-10, 1-1 SBC) broke open the tie game with the four-run eighth with three hits and a pair of hit batsmen. Garlington's two-run double down the rightfield line came on a hit-and-run, scoring Brett Lawler from third and Brian Smiley all the way from first. After the second hit batter of the inning by Middle Tennessee reliever Langdon Stanley, Gotcher's two-run double to leftcenter was the back-breaker of the inning, giving the Trojans a 5-1 advantage. Middle Tennessee (8-11, 1-1) scored once in the eighth and put two runners on in the ninth before Josh Horn's hard grounder into the hole at short forced a runner at third for the final out of the game. Stanley (1-4) took the loss, working a career-long 4.2 innings and giving up four runs on six hits, striking out two and hitting a pair of batters. Middle Tennessee starter Tyler Copeland allowed one run on five hits in 4.1 innings, walking one, striking out one and hitting two batters as well. UALR starter Trevor Clay held the Blue Raiders to just three hits through five innings and gave up one run on six hits in six-plus innings. Clay walked one and struck out four. Trojans reliever Adam Miller (5-1) picked up the win, working three innings and allowing one run on four hits while striking out three. Wayne Kendrick recorded three of Middle Tennessee's 10 hits, while Jeff Beachum doubled, tripled, scored a run and drove in another. Lawler went 3-for-4 for UALR and Gotcher and Smiley both had a pair of hits. Copeland allowed the leadoff hitter to reach in all five innings of work and pitched out of trouble in the third after hitting Drew Gray and walking Gotcher to start the frame. But the lefthander got Jacob Stover to fly out after a nine-pitch at-bat, induced a foul out from Derek Eilers and struck out Matt King. But the Trojans finally broke through in the fifth when Grey and Gotcher led off with consecutive singles. After a flyout Eilers singled to left, plating Grey for a 1-0 UALR lead and ending Copeland's day. Middle Tennessee tied the game in the sixth when Chase Eakes reached on an infield single and moved to second when the throw was wild. Horn's sacrifice bunt moved the runner to third before Beachum blooped a double down the rightfield line, as the wind knocked the ball down and it fell in front of Stover just inside the line. The Blue Raiders had a chance to take the lead in the seventh after a walk to Michael McKenry and a single from Kendrick to leadoff. Pinch-hitter Nathan Hines grounded out, putting runners on second and third. But Miller got a groundout from Adam Warren and struck out Eakes to end the inning with the game still tied at one. UALR took

advantage of the missed opportunity with four runs in the eighth, starting when Stanley hit Lawler with one out. Smiley executed the hit-and-run with a single to left, putting runners on the corners. Garlington then did the same, driving in both runners with a double down the rightfield line. After another hit batter, Gotcher's two-run double to leftcenter gave the Trojans a 5-1 advantage. Middle Tennessee got a run back in the bottom of the eighth and could have gotten more except for a nice defensive play by UALR. Beachum tripled with one out and Todd Martin plated the run with a two-out single to right. McKenry then laced a ball toward leftfield, but third baseman Smiley made a diving catch to end the inning with UALR holding a 5-2 lead. The Blue Raiders put two runners on in the ninth with singles from Kendrick and Eakes, but Horn's grounder to short was the final out. The Blue Raiders and Trojans conclude the three-game series Sunday at 1 p.m. Middle Tennessee hosts Samford Tuesday at 7 p.m. and Wednesday at 3 p.m.

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