Freshmen Lead 13-4 Baseball Win

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Freshman Brett Smalley tossed five innings of one-hit baseball and freshman Dillon Heath had three hits and scored twice, leading Middle Tennessee to a 13-4 victory over Samford Tuesday night at Reese Smith Field. Smalley (1-0) tossed five shutout innings his first collegiate start to get the win, allowing only a bunt single in the fifth. The righthander walked one and struck out three. Heath, in his first career start, went 3-for-5 and scored twice, serving as the designated hitter. Jeff Beachum, Wayne Kendrick and Michael McKenry all had a pair of hits in Middle Tennessee's 14-hit attack, while the Blue Raider pitching staff limited the visiting Bulldogs to just four hits. Beachum and Todd Martin each drove in three runs, while Kendrick and Rawley Bishop both had two RBIs. The Blue Raiders (10-11) scored four times in the fourth inning to break a scoreless game. Samford (12-13) plated one run in the sixth, but Middle Tennessee answered with three runs in the bottom of the inning to take an 8-1 advantage. The Bulldogs scored three times in the seventh to cut into the deficit, but a five-run eighth inning from the Blue Raiders put the game away. Samford starter Chandler Tidwell (0-4) allowed six earned runs in 5.1 innings, while Kyle Nichols came on to give up just one hits in 1.2 innings. The final two SU hurlers allowed five runs in the final inning. Middle Tennessee's Jimmy Kelly faced five batters and got just one out in the sixth, hitting a batter and walking two as well as a runner reaching on an error. But Tommy Sterritt came on to get out of the jam, getting a strikeout and a groundout with Middle Tennessee leading 4-1. Sterritt gave up three runs in the seventh and Nick Marrs came on for the final two innings, striking out one and not allowing a hit. The Blue Raiders got on the board with four runs in the fourth, starting with a high drive from Marcus Taylor that cleared the rightfield wall for his fifth homer of the season, a solo shot. Chase Eakes followed with a walk, Heath reached on an infield single and Josh Horn walked, loading the bases before Beachum laced a double just inside the third base bag and into the corner, clearing the bases for a 4-0 lead. Samford's Joseph Ballew was hit to leadoff the sixth and Trey Moody reached on an error before Louis Rojas walked to load the bases. Another free pass, this one to Parker Gargis, forced in a run, but the Bulldogs struck out twice and grounded out to end the inning without any further damage for the Blue Raiders. Middle Tennessee struck for four runs on four hits and one big error in the bottom of the inning. Eakes began the inning with a double and Heath followed with a bloop single to leftcenter, putting runners on the corners. Horn's grounder was booted by Gargis at third base, allowing the run to score. After a sacrifice bunt, Kendrick battled through an eight-pitch at-bat before doubling down the rightfield line, scoring a pair. With two outs

McKenry tripled to rightcenter, scoring Kendrick for an 8-1 advantage. But the Bulldogs responded with three runs of their own in the seventh, starting with a leadoff walk to Matt Alling. Pinch-hitter Hunter Tubbs singled to right and Moody singled with one out to load the bases. A single to center from Rojas plated two runs and after a walk, Bear Burnett's foulout scored a run, cutting the Blue Raider lead to 8-4. The Blue Raiders added five insurance runs in the eighth on just two hits, taking advantage of three walks and an error. Horn and Beachum drew walks to leadoff and Kendrick's sacrifice bunt pulled the first baseman off the bag. Martin's double into leftcenter cleared the bases and after a walk and a fielder's choice, Rawley Bishop laced a double down the leftfield line, scoring two runs for a 13-4 Middle Tennessee advantage. The Blue Raiders and Bulldogs play again Wednesday at 3 p.m. at Reese Smith Field. **GAME NOTES**

Freshman Brett Smalley made his first career start on the mound after two relief appearances ... Freshman Dillon Heath made his first career start, drawing the nod as the designated hitter ... Jeff Beachum extended his hitting streak to six games with a leadoff single in the first ... Josh Horn's four-game hitting streak came to an end with an 0-for-2 performance. Horn did walk twice and scored three runs ... Todd Martin's three-run double in the eighth extended his hitting streak to four games.

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