Baseball falls to Portland in 2-1 pitching duel

Adkins puts together solid outing in his 2011 debut

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - For seven innings, Middle Tennessee's Hunter Adkins and Portland's Kyle Kraus engaged in an exciting pitching duel, but for the second day in a row Portland cashed in with a late run to seal a 2-1 victory for the Pilots over the Blue Raiders at Reese Smith Jr. Field on Saturday afternoon. After allowing a solo home run in the second inning, Adkins shut out the Pilots over the ensuing five, leaving the mound with the affair tied up at 1-1. The Signal Mountain, Tenn., native finished the game with seven innings pitched, surrendering seven hits and one run while striking out three. "It was a great starting pitching match-up," head coach Steve Peterson said. "I don't think Hunter got off to the start that he wanted, but I think Dain McNabb called a great game behind the plate for us and got him settled down. It's a shame we couldn't get him a win today. He deserved it." Justin Guidry took over on the mound for Adkins in the eighth and gave up three hits and one run. Paul Mittura made his collegiate debut in the ninth, allowing just one hit. Offensively, Johnny Morris and Hank LaRue were the only Blue Raiders with multiple hits, each going 2-4 at the plate. Will Skinner was 1-2 and earned a pair of walks. Matthew Drake and Ryan Ford picked up a hit apiece, and the Blue Raiders were outhit by the Pilots, 11-7. Middle Tennessee would leave 13 runners on base over the course of the game to Portland's eight. Collectively, the Blue Raiders were 2-20 with runners in scoring position. "We just didn't execute when we had to," Peterson said. "You have to keep in mind that it's the second game of the season, and we have a lot of inexperienced ball players out there. We have a lot we need to work on. You have to give Portland credit though, they did what they needed to do to win." Portland grabbed an early lead for the second straight day, as Turner Gill sent an Adkins pitch over the right field wall in the second inning. After stranding runners in scoring position in the second, third and fifth innings, MT finally broke through in the bottom of the seventh. LaRue singled up the middle, and advanced to second after Guidry reached on a fielding error by UP's Riley Henricks. Skinner singled to center field to plate LaRue. A wild pitch by Kraus allowed Guidry and Skinner to advance to third and second, respectively, but Jay Morris grounded out to end the threat. The Pilots struck again in the eighth. Kris Kauppila started the frame off with a single, and would eventually score on a two-out

double by Matt Mardesich. The Blue Raiders looked to be in good shape in the ninth as Thomas led off with a double down the left field line, but he would end the game there. Middle Tennessee will close out the series with Portland tomorrow afternoon at Reese Smith Jr. Field. Daniel Palo is expected to start for the Blue Raiders and first pitch is set for noon.

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