Hot Hitting Gives Blue Raiders First Sun Belt Series Win

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DENTON, TX. - Middle Tennessee softball won its first Sun Belt series of the season defeating North Texas (17-26, 1-5 SBC) 11-1 in the second game of its doubleheader on Saturday. The Blue Raiders dropped game one 8-2. Middle Tennessee won game one of the series 8-5 on Friday.

The Blue Raiders improve to 3-3 in the Sun Belt and are now 13-31-1 overall. Middle Tennessee ended its five games for the week 3-2.

"I am glad that our tough preseason paid off, it has prepared us to compete in our conference," said Head Coach Leigh Podlesny. "This team has been through a lot of challenging situations and have made it through and we our focused on softball."

Middle Tennessee had a season-high 16 hits to help the Blue Raiders take game two of their doubleheader with North Texas. Freshman Laura Moore started her first game in a month to lead the Blue Raiders on the mound and improve to 6-10 on the season.

North Texas opened game two the way it started game one, with a run. Kelei Walker hit a triple to right field and scored off a Middle Tennessee miscue.

Middle Tennessee broke out for five runs in the second inning. Trish White hit a one out double to start things off and scored when Kristine Reed hit an RBI single. Reed moved into scoring position thanks to a sacrifice hit by Brandi Boehner and scored when Justine Cerda hit an RBI single. The Blue Raiders continued to roll when Katie Mielke hit a double and North Texas loaded the bases when Mean Green pitcher Kristina Fowler walked Shelby Stiner. Martha Davis cleared the bases when she hit the first triple of her career to put the Blue Raiders up 5-1.

"Martha was on fire this weekend," Podlesny said. "We really needed her versatility and is doing great job and it is a credit to her athleticism."

Muriel Ledbetter led off with a single in the third inning. With two outs Boehner hit a single that advanced Ledbetter to third. Ledbetter scored off an RBI single by Cerda.

The Blue Raiders added two runs in the fourth inning. Stiner hit her seventh double of the season and then scored when Ledbetter hit a bomb over the centerfield wall. It was Ledbetter's eighth homerun of the season.

In the sixth inning, Middle Tennessee tacked on three runs. Davis got a free pass to first base when she was hit by a pitch. Back-to-back singles by Melissa Weiland and Ledbetter loaded the bases and White hit a single to right field to score Davis. Reed plated Weiland and Ledbetter when she hit a two RBI single.

The added runs in the sixth enforced the run-rule on North Texas and the game ended after six innings. Ledbetter and Reed lead the Blue Raiders each going 3-for-4. Ledbetter also had two RBI and three runs scored. Reed three RBI and scored one run.

Katya Muller started things off North Texas when she hit a lead-off homerun to begin game one. Middle Tennessee answered with a homerun its own in the fourth inning when Davis hit a homerun to knot the game up at one.

North Texas took the lead in the bottom of the fifth inning. With two outs Muller hit a single and scored off an RBI double by Walker. Susan Waters' RBI double scored Walker to give the Mean Green a 3-1 lead.

Stiner hit her second single of the game to lead off the sixth inning and advanced to second off a North Texas error. Stiner moved into scoring position thanks to a pass ball and scored when Cerda hit an RBI single to pull to within one run, 3-2.

North Texas exploded for five runs in the bottom of the sixth inning to put game one away. Ashley Katinas started the game and was replaced by Moore who tossed two scoreless innings before giving up the lead to North Texas. Katinas came back into the game in the top of the sixth inning and after loading the bases was replaced by Trish White who gave up three runs on four hits.

Moore took the loss in the game. Stiner led the Blue Raiders in game one going 2-for-3 with a run scored.

For the series, Middle Tennessee hit .387 as a team with nine doubles, two triples and five homeruns. The Blue Raider club also had 20 RBI and 20 runs scored.

Middle Tennessee will finally be home on Tuesday, April 18 when the Blue Raiders will play in the renovated Blue Raider Softball Park. The ribbon cutting ceremony will begin at approximately 3:30 p.m. and following that Middle Tennessee will play Tennessee Tech in a doubleheader that will begin at 4 p.m.

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