

Raiders Fall to WKU, 7-5

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Scotty Colt had three hits and scored twice and Dennis Winn drove in a pair of runs in Western Kentucky's 7-5 victory over Middle Tennessee Saturday afternoon at Reese Smith Field. The visiting Hilltoppers (15-15, 3-8 SBC) scored four times in the third to take the lead and then twice more in the fifth when the game was tied. Colt had an RBI single in the third and led off the fifth with a double. WKU's bullpen gave up just three hits and struck out five in 5.1 innings, with Evan Teague (2-1) getting the win and Bryan Rider recording the final three outs for his second save.

Middle Tennessee (16-14, 4-4) got 4.2 scoreless innings from reliever Langdon Stanley, but Tommy Sterritt (0-2) allowed three runs, two earned, in two-plus innings of relief to take the loss. Jeff Beachum was 4-for-5 with two runs scored and one RBI for the Blue Raiders, while Wayne Kendrick and Adam Warren both had two hits. The Blue Raiders scored in the first when Beachum and Kendrick both singled to start the inning. A fielder's choice put runners on the corners and Warren's two-out single on the leftside plated Beachum. In the second Matt Campbell fouled off four pitches before singling to center with one out. Chase Eakes followed with a double down the rightfield line, but Campbell was gunned down at the plate with a good relay from WKU second baseman Matt Ransdell. Beachum singled to rightcenter with two outs, scoring Eakes for a 2-0 Middle Tennessee lead. But the Hilltoppers took the lead in the third, ending Middle Tennessee starter Brett Smalley's day. Jack Ambrose reached on an error to start the inning and scored on Ransdell's single to center. Corteze Armstrong then singled through the hole on the rightside and Colt's single to left plated a run. Jordan Newton's single to left scored Armstrong and Colt scored two batters later on a fielder's choice for a 4-2 WKU advantage. Ambrose's first career home run, a shot to rightfield helped by the wind, put the Hilltoppers ahead, 5-2, in the fourth. Middle Tennessee tied the contest with three runs in the bottom of the fourth. Eakes walked and Beachum laid down a perfect bunt, reaching for his third hit of the game. Kendrick's single to center loaded the bases and one run scored on a groundout. Pinch-hitter Dillon Heath then singled to right, plating two runs to tie the game. But WKU scored twice more in the fifth to take the lead for good, starting with a leadoff double from Colt. Newton followed with a walk before Casey Hamilton's fielder's choice. The throw to first from

Kendrick went into the dugout, allowing Colt to score. Winn's single to right scored Hamilton for a 7-5 'Toppers lead. The Blue Raiders were unable to score any more runs, stranding 10 runners in the contest. Middle Tennessee left two on in the first and second innings as well as the sixth and seventh. In the sixth two walks put the Blue Raiders in position to score, but Heath grounded into an inning-ending doubleplay. In the seventh an error and single put two runners on, but Eakes struck out to end the inning. The two teams conclude the series Sunday at 1 p.m., with Middle Tennessee Chad Edwards (0-2, 7.63) facing WKU's Kenny Griffin (3-1, 7.62). **GAME NOTES** Wayne Kendrick extended his hitting streak to a career-long and team season-best 12 games with a single in the first.

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