Baseball looking to rebound at Tennessee Tech

Blue Raiders travel to Cookeville for mid-week clash

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - After falling to Portland over the weekend, the Middle Tennessee baseball team will look to get back on track on Wednesday when they take on in-state foe Tennessee Tech at Averitt Baseball Complex in Cookeville, Tenn. The Blue Raiders fell in three close games over the weekend, losing by just a single run on both Friday and Saturday and leaving the tying-run on deck on Sunday. Tennessee Tech will be entering the match-up having dropped three games to Virginia Tech, Coastal Carolina and Boston College at an event in Myrtle Beach, S.C., this past weekend. Under the direction of Steve Peterson, the Blue Raiders have been very successful against the Golden Eagles, holding a 39-29-1 record since 1988, including a 14-4-1 mark since joining the Sun Belt Conference in 2001. In games in Cookeville, MT holds a 16-12-1 edge, including the last season's 13-9 victory. The Blue Raiders will look to the right arm of Eric Gilley on the mound. The senior allowed three runs on Friday night, leaving the game after picking up a minor injury at the end of the fourth inning. In 2010, the senior posted a 6-2 record with an ERA of 4.32 over 75.0 innings of work. At the plate, Tyler Acker has been clutch, hitting .500 last weekend and picking up a number of two-out hits that helped Middle Tennessee keep close with Portland. The senior also scored two runs and knocked in three. He starred defensively as well, picking off a pair of runners on the basepaths in two starts at catcher. Will Skinner has also been a force to be reckoned with, hitting

.364 with a home run, a double and three runs scored. He's walked twice and boasts of a team-best on base percentage of .533. Johnny Thomas, new to Middle Tennessee after transferring from New Orleans, has held his own in the lead off spot, hitting .417 in three starts with two walks and a run scored. Middle Tennessee and Tennessee Tech will square off Wednesday at Averitt Baseball Complex at 3 PM. No Blue Raider Network radio coverage will be available for this game. **Peterson in the hunt for 900 -** Blue Raider baseball coach Steve Peterson currently holds a career record of 895-671-3, including a 742-575-3 mark at Middle Tennesee. Peterson, who is his 24th season in Murfreesboro, is one of the most successful coaches in the region, boasting of 11 conference regular season championships, nine tournament titles and nine NCAA Regional berths. Peterson is entering 2011 with 15 career seasons of 30 or more victories and four of 40+ wins, including a 44-18 mark in 2009. **Ford off to hot start -** Perhaps known more for his glove than his bat, shortstop Ryan Ford is hitting .400 through three games this season. The standout defensive player posted a career-best three hits in just four plate appearances on Sunday against Portland.

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