Skinner homers twice in 10-6 Blue Raider victory

Middle Tennessee picks up first win of the season at Tennessee Tech

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COOKEVILLE, Tenn. - Will Skinner walked to the plate twice with the score even between the Middle Tennessee baseball team and Tennessee Tech on Wednesday, and both times the senior sent a ball over the fence in left field, leading the Blue Raiders to a 10-6 victory over the Golden Eagles at Averitt Baseball Complex in Cookeville, Tenn. "I've said since the start of the season that we're trying to build the line-up around Will Skinner," head coach Steve Peterson said. "He had some big, big, clutch hits tonight and the two home runs, of course. It's a good win for us." Wednesday marked the third time in his career that Skinner has homered twice in a game. The Murfreesboro native finished 3-5 at the plate with four runs batted in and two runs scored. Tyler Acker and Guidry also tallied three hits in five at bats in the game. Guidry scored three times and knocked in two. Acker also posted a pair of RBI. Johnny Thomas was the only other Blue Raider with multiple hits, going 2-4 with a walk and two runs scored. Hank LaRue was 1-3 and drew a pair of walks, scoring three times. As a team, the Blue Raiders (1-3) outhit the Golden Eagles 14-9. On the mound, Eric Gilley allowed four runs and five hits over 3.1 innings, and Jud Stoltz took over in the fourth, giving up a pair of runs and one hit in 2.2 innings of work. Hunter Dawson pitched just one inning,

allowing a hit and a pair of walks, but earned his first win of the season. Keaton Baker pitched a scoreless final two frames to pick up his first career save. Middle Tennessee opened up the affair with a two-run first inning. LaRue worked a full count, drawing a walk on the tenth pitch of the at bat and the stole second. A Guidry single up the middle advanced LaRue to third. The freshman ultimately scored on a Skinner deep fly. Acker laced a two-out double to right center to score Guidry. TTU answered quickly. After loading the bases, the Golden Eagles utilized a Zach Stephens single through the right side and a Zephan Guyear fielder's choice, to grab a 3-2 edge in the bottom of the frame. The Blue Raiders retook the lead in the top of the third. Thomas led off with a double to right field, and advanced to third on a LaRue groundout. Guidry singled to bring home Thomas. Skinner followed up with a two-run blast to left center, handing Middle Tennessee a 5-3 lead. After Tennessee Tech pulled back within one run in the bottom of the fourth, the Blue Raiders answered with a run of their own in the fifth. LaRue opened with a walk and advanced to second on a Skinner single. An infield single by Morris later in the inning moved LaRue to third, and an errant throw allowed him to score. The Golden Eagles knotted things up in the bottom of the seventh. Casanova Donaldson drew a walk to lead off the inning, and Chad Oberacker homered in the next at bat to even the score at 6-6. TTU loaded the bases with one out, but Dawson induced a double play to end the threat, paving the way for a decisive Skinner solo shot in the eighth. Middle Tennessee tacked on some insurance runs in the ninth. Thomas, LaRue and Guidry hit three consecutive singles to score the first run, and a wild pitch brought home LaRue for the second. Acker laced a two out single to plate Guidry and push the MT advantage out to four at 10-6. Middle Tennessee will now prepare for a home series against Jacksonville State this weekend. The Blue Raiders and Gamecocks will start off with an afternoon meeting at Reese Smith Jr. Field on Friday. First pitch is set for 3 p.m.

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