Middle Tennessee falls to Jacksonville State in 14 innings

Davis Pearce sets career high with four hits

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - After making a late four-run comeback to send the game to extra innings, the Middle Tennessee baseball team ultimately fell to visiting Jacksonville State 9-6 in 14 innings on Saturday at Reese Smith Jr. Field. In his first career start for the Blue Raiders (1-5), Davis Pearce put on a show at the plate, going 4-for-6 with a walk, a run scored and a pair of runs batted in. The Murfreesboro native played a key role in a four-run eighth inning rally, knocking in a run and later scoring. "We tried to get something going with some new people in the line-up today, and Davis' work was very positive," head coach Steve Peterson said. "He had some very, very good at bats and played a very good first base. He was big for us today." Tyler Acker made the start behind the plate and posted his third three-hit day of the young season, finishing 3-for-6 with two runs scored and a run batted in. Will Skinner was the only other Blue Raider with multiple hits and ended 2-for-6, recording two runs scored and a run batted in. Jay Morris came into pinch hit in the eighth inning for Ryan Ford, and answered with a game-changing two-run double down the left field line to even things up at 6-6. The senior transfer from New Orleans finished 1-for-2. Middle Tennessee was outhit 18-14 and left 12 runners on base compared to JSU's 15. Pitcher Daniel Palo made his second start of the season for Middle Tennessee. The sophomore allowed six runs in the first three innings, but put the side down in order in the fourth and worked himself out of a bases loaded jam in the fifth. Palo finished with six earned runs and a pair of strikeouts in five innings of work. Paul Mittura relieved Palo in the sixth and gave 4.2 strong innings to MT, allowing five hits and no runs. After reliever Keaton Baker went down with an apparent injury in the 10th inning, Hunter Dawson made the switch from second base to the mound, and performed admirably. The senior started off by stranding three on base in the 10th, induced an inning-ending double play in the 11th, and put the side down in order in both the 12th and the 13th. However, JSU got on the board in the 14th with a trio of runs, handing Dawson his first loss of the season. Jacksonville State (2-2) got on

the board with a three-run first inning, two of which came via a Ben Waldrip home run. The Gamecocks added another in the top of the second. Middle Tennessee grabbed two runs back in the bottom of the second. Skinner led off with a single up the middle, and Acker brought him home with a triple to right center. A Pearce grounder allowed Acker to score, cutting the deficit to two. JSU mounted a response in the third, tacking on two more runs with one coming off another Waldrip homer. The Blue Raiders finally evened things up in the eighth. Hank LaRue led off with a walk and eventually scored on a Skinner double to left field. Following an Acker single, Pearce hit a ball up the middle to score Skinner. A passed ball put both Acker and Pearce in scoring position, setting up for the Morris pinch hit double to tie things up at 6-6. Both teams would have multiple opportunities in the ensuing six innings with Middle Tennessee stranding a runner in scoring position in the 10th, 12th and 13th. JSU did the same in the 10th and the 11th before cashing in for three runs in the top of the 14th. Middle Tennessee will now prepare to close out the series on Sunday afternoon at Reese Smith Jr. Field. First pitch is set for 1 p.m.

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