

Blue Raiders take 9-4 win over Salukis

Skinner, Thomas each record three hits

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Senior Eric Gilley guided the Blue Raiders on the mound Tuesday afternoon picking up the win as Middle Tennessee took a 9-5 win over Southern Illinois at Reese Smith Jr. Field. Gilley allowed just two hits to the Salukis in five innings of work. The Hendersonville, Tenn., native also struck out four batters on his way to improving to 1-1 on the season. Sophomore Hunter Adkins and junior Justin Guidry closed the game for Middle Tennessee on the mound. Adkins worked one inning allowing one run on two hits while Guidry allowed four runs on seven hits in three innings of work. "The difference in the game was in the first inning when SIU left runners on base. Eric got out



of the jam and that was huge. It was a good solid win for us as a program that has been struggling. We have a lot of young guys who need the taste of winning and need to know what it takes to win," head coach Steve Peterson said. The Blue Raiders recorded 13 hits as a team with junior Johnny Thomas and senior Will Skinner leading the way with three. Thomas went 3 for 5 on the day with a double, two RBI and scored a run. The Kenner, La., native also recorded the final out of the game when he snagged a ball hit by SIU's Brock Harding. Skinner went 3 for 4 on the day with a double, one RBI and scored three runs for the Blue Raiders. Sophomore Ryan Ford and freshman Hank LaRue also had multiple hit days as each recorded two hits in the game. "I was very pleased with our situational hitting. We had some very big RBI from the bottom of the order, Ryan Ford, Johnny Thomas really contributed. Except for the throwing error at third trying to get a guy out a second we played really good defense and Will Skinner made an outstanding catch in right field," Peterson said. Middle Tennessee opened the third inning with a single by Ford. Ford scored from second on a single by Skinner to give the Blue Raiders the first run of the game. Then Lawrence reached on a throwing error by SIU's shortstop allowing two more runs to score and put Middle Tennessee up 3-0. The Blue Raiders added one run each in the fourth and the fifth making it 5-0 to begin the sixth.

Middle Tennessee scored another four runs on four hits in the bottom of the sixth to take its lead out to eight, 9-1. Southern Illinois attempted a comeback in the ninth scoring four runs on four hits making it 9-5 before Harding's lineout ended the rally. Middle Tennessee will be back in action on Wednesday, March 16 when they play host to SIU in the final game of the two-game series. First pitch is set for 3 p.m. at Reese Smith Jr. Field.

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