Baseball Blasted at Troy, 18-1

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TROY, Ala. - Troy scored in the first six innings of the game, including five in the first and four in the sixth, en route to an 18-1 victory and series win over Middle Tennessee Friday night at Riddle-Pace Field. The Trojans secured at least a share of the Sun Belt championship with Friday's win in their first year in the league. Troy (40-14, 19-4 Sun Belt) plated five runs in the first on four hits and two Middle Tennessee errors, knocking starter Tyler Copeland from the game after seven batters. The Trojans added one run in the second, three runs in both the third and fourth, two more in the fifth and four runs in the sixth to take an 18-1 advantage. Tom King, Clint Robinson and Bryan Madill all homered for Troy, while Josh Dew drove in four runs in the 15-hit attack for the home team. Troy starter Joe Hallahan (6-3) worked six innings for the win, allowing one run on four hits and walking four. Steven Morelock, Ryan Ellison and Jon Gianquitti tossed the final three innings for the Trojans. Copeland (6-4) lasted just one-third of an inning to take the loss, giving up five runs on four hits. Tommy Sterritt allowed four runs on three hits in 2.2 innings, and Peter Mantzanis gave up nine runs on seven hits in 2.1 innings. Shay Horseman allowed just one hit and no runs in the final 2.2 innings. With New Orleans winning again over Arkansas State, Middle Tennessee falls to sixth place in the Sun Belt heading into the final day of play. UNO must lose and the Blue Raiders win, otherwise Middle Tennessee will face South Alabama in the first round of the Sun Belt Championships next week. "That was a blood-letting. They beat us every way they could beat us," head coach Steve Peterson said. "We're not swinging the bats well and that started last week and has continued into this one. I have to give credit to the opposing pitching but I can't give all of the credit to [Troy]. "The expression is 'Hitting is contagious.' But really it's batting at the plate, fighting off pitches and trying to put the ball in play. Sometimes you have to be lucky but if you put the ball in play, sometimes you get lucky." The Blue Raiders (27-23, 10-12) scored once in the first but missed an opportunity to add more. Nathan Hines singled with one out before consecutive two-out walks to Michael McKenry and Todd Martin loaded the bases. Adam Warren singled to right, scoring Hines, but Josh Horn bounced into a fielder's choice to end the inning. The Trojans didn't take long to respond, scoring five times in the bottom of the inning on four hits and two Blue Raider errors. Ian Craze singled to right to leadoff

and King followed with a perfect hit-and-run single, putting runners on the corners. Jared Keel followed with an RBI double down the leftfield line, and Dew reached on a throwing error by Jeff Beachum, plating King. Robinson was hit by a breaking ball, loading the bases, and Blake Green plated Keel with a sacrifice fly. Edgar Ramirez then singled through the middle, scoring Dew, and the runners moved to second and third when Martin kicked the ball in centerfield. That also ended the day for Copeland. Sterritt came in and walked the next two batters, forcing in a run, before getting Craze to popout and King to flyout to end the inning. Robinson belted a two-out solo home run in the second, his seventh of the season, for a 6-1 Troy lead. Bryan Madril walked in the Troy third and Craze drilled a single off the shin of Sterritt. King followed with a three-run homer, his eighth of the year, for a 9-1 advantage for the home team. Green walked and Ramirez singled before Madril lined a home run over the short porch in rightfield in the fourth for a 12-1 Troy lead. In the Trojans fifth King singled but Keel bounced into a fielder's choice. After a wild pitch, Dew's single to rightcenter plated Keel. After Robinson was hit for the second time in the game, pinch-hitter Kevin Wiedlich singled to right, plating Dew for a 14-1 advantage. Hines reached on an error in the Middle Tennessee sixth but was erased on a 4-6-3 doubleplay. McKenry followed with a single and Martin and Warren both walked to load the bases, but Horn bounced into another fielder's choice to end the threat. Troy added four more run in the bottom of the sixth on a two-run double from Nick Smith and a two-run single by Dew. The Blue Raiders have managed just 11 hits in the two games against Troy and only four runs in the past three games including a 4-1 loss at Vanderbilt on Tuesday. The two teams conclude the series Saturday at 1 p.m. Both squads will compete in the Sun Belt Championships in Bowling Green, Ky., beginning Wednesday. **GAME NOTES**

Dillon Heath drew the start in leftfield, his third in left and fifth in the outfield this season ... Adam Warren's RBI single in the first broke a 2-for-20 slump dating to May 10 against Memphis. It was Warren's first RBI since May 10 as well ... Wayne Kendrick's single in the third extended his hitting streak to nine games ... Jeff Beachum's 12-game hitting streak came to an end with an 0-for-3 effort ... Todd Martin's career-best 17-game hitting streak came to an end with an 0-for-2 effort with two walks.

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