

# Softball splits with Troy

## Rubber-match to be played Saturday at noon

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### **MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -**

The Middle Tennessee softball team picked up its 15th win of the season on Friday in a 4-1 defeat of Troy in the second-half of a doubleheader.

The MT win marks the first time in eight matches, the Blue Raider have defeated the Trojans. The squad will play the rubber-match for its first conference win over Troy since 2008 on Saturday at noon.

After dropping the first game 4-2, the Blue Raiders wasted little time attacking the Trojans in the second contest. MT put up four runs in the first inning. Kelsey Woodruff and Kaycee Popham drove in the runs, each having two-RBI doubles. Nina Davenport and Kayla Toney singled. Corrie Abel also walked earlier in the side to help set the table for Woodruff and Popham. Brittney Banania earned her 12th sacrifice hit of the season as well. She leads the Sun Belt Conference in the statistic.



Pitcher Janele Robinson threw 3.1 innings of no-hit work, before Troy's Nikki Hollett broke up the no no on a deep double to centerfield. On the following play, right fielder Nina Dever then made defensive play of the game. Dever followed a great catch on a long swirling fly ball with a laser-beam throw to gun-down Hollett attempting to advance to third, ending the fourth.

After surrendering one run in the following inning, Davenport made an almost equally impressive snag, as she dove to snare a hard-hit shot to the gap in left center. Troy had runners at second and third on the play. The catch ended the side.

The four runs was all Robinson needed to achieve her fourth win of the season. The Toledo, Ill., native went the distance allowing no earned runs off just four hits. She struck out six, while walking one in the decision.

The game was appropriately capped off in the seventh, when Kristi Marquez turned a line-out into three five double-play to end the game.

The first contest was a tightly contested affair that saw two evenly matched squads go back and forth for seven exciting innings.

Troy struck early, bringing home a run in the first inning.

In the third, Kelsey Dortch knotted the game on her 16th RBI of her senior campaign. She earned the stat on a shallow sacrifice fly, scoring a pinch-running Kandra Singleton from third. Corrie Abel singled earlier in the side, prior to being subbed for Singelton.

With the total score 1-1 after three, the Trojans added one in the fourth and one in the fifth, advancing the tally to 3-1.

Abel tried to ignite the rally in the sixth, when she drove home Brittney Banania on a deep two-bag hit to left field. Abel has 14 doubles on the season, second most in the Sun Belt Conference.

Popham also doubled in the game, giving her two on the day and eight for the season.

It was not to be for Middle Tennessee as Troy added an insurance-run in the sixth, ending the game 4-2.

Pitcher Caty Jutson was solid in her eighth loss of the season. Despite giving up four earned runs off nine hits, the junior was threw well not giving up a big hit in a handful of pressure situations. She struck out three and walked two in the game.

On the day, the team advances to 15-28, including a 6-14 mark in Sun Belt play.

"I thought both pitchers threw well today," head coach Sue Nevar said. "Janele picked up the "W," and I really thought Caty could have gotten the win, but did not get the big hits we needed. If we play like we did today in tomorrow's game, we should have a good chance to take the series."

The first pitch of Saturday's rubber-match will be thrown out at noon. Live audio and statistics will be available on GoBlueRaiders.com with content and interviews available on Twitter.com/MT\_Softball.

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