Softball goes 2-0 on final day of Cougar Classic

MT knocks off Virginia Tech and College of Charleston

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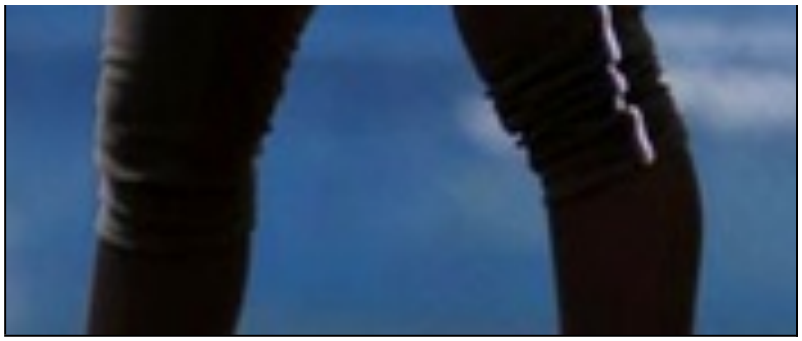
MT. PLEASANT, S.C. -- The Middle Tennessee softball team defeated Virginia Tech 7-4 and College of Charleston 4-2 on Sunday at the Patriots Point Athletics Complex.

The Blue Raiders continued their two-out success early against the Hokies. Samantha Nieves and Kayla Toney recorded consecutive one-out singles and both advanced into scoring position on an error by Virginia Tech left fielder Kristen Froehlich. Following a Natalie Ysais fly-out, Kaycee Popham put Middle Tennessee up 2-0 with a two-out, two-run single.

Virginia Tech added a run of its own in the top of the second when Kelsey Mericka scored on a Logan Spaw sacrifice fly to cut the Blue Raider lead to 2-1.

The Hokies threatened in the third after Kylie McGoldrick and Lauren Gaskill opened the inning with back-to-back singles. Froehlich advanced them to second and third with one out but Middle Tennessee starter Caty Jutson induced Dani Anderson to line into a double play to get the Blue



Raiders out of the innings maintaining their 2-1 lead.

Middle Tennessee extended its lead to 5-1 with a three-run third. Toney led off with a triple and was knocked home on a Popham RBI single to left. Kelsey Woodruff followed with another hit before Laura Dukes walked to load the bases. Kristi Marquez then proceeded to put the Blue Raiders up 4-1 with a run-scoring single, scoring Popham and knocking Virginia Tech starter Bailey Liddle out of the game. Middle Tennessee increased its lead to 5-1 when a Nina Dever sacrifice fly brought home Woodruff. Marquez, however, was thrown out trying to advance to second on the play to end the inning.

The offensive barrage continued in the fourth as Middle Tennessee added another two runs to build a 7-1 advantage. The inning began much like the first as Nieves and Toney reached base with one-out singles. Ysais and Popham followed with a pair of RBI knocks to left to give the Blue Raiders a commanding 7-1 lead.

After being limited to just one run on three hits through the first five innings, the Hokies finally got to Jutson in the sixth with a two-out rally. Spaw collected an RBI single to score Wolff and McGoldrick added a two-run knock to cut the Blue Raider lead to 7-4. Virginia Tech was unable to get any closer, however, as Jutson got McGaskill to pop up on the infield and end the inning.

The Hokies attempted to put together another rally in the seventh when Anderson doubled with one out. She never advanced past second base as Jutson shut the door, retiring Mericka on a pop-up to second and Liddle on a groundout to shortstop to end the game. Middle Tennessee temporarily boosted its record to 2-5 while Virginia Tech dropped to 9-6 on the season. Jutson pitched all seven innings to get the win, allowing four earned runs on seven hits. Hokie starter Isabella Corrao was attributed the loss as she gave up two runs (one earned) on three hits in just one inning. Popham went 3-4 at the dish with four RBIs to pace Middle Tennessee. Toney added three hits of her own as well as three runs scored and Nieves tallied a pair of singles while scoring two runs. Virginia Tech was led by McGoldrick who went 2-2 with two runs batted in. A pitcher's duel broke out in the second game of the day as Middle Tennessee freshman Caitlin McClure and College of Charleston's Hope Klicker traded zeros through the first four innings. The Blue Raiders were able to break through in the fifth when Dever doubled home Bethany Jones to take a 1-0 lead. Middle Tennessee opened it up an inning later with a three-run sixth. Toney began the rally with a one-out single, Ysais walked and Popham reached on an error by third baseman Kelsey Hodgson to load the bases. Dukes followed with an RBI single, knocking Klicker out of the game. Woodruff then provided the big blow with a two-run single to left to score Popham and Ysais and make it 4-0.

The Cougars would not go away, however, picking up a pair of runs in the bottom of the inning. Kelsey Hodgson began the frame with a single and Amanda Lonergan followed with a walk. Shelby Stinnett was brought on to replace McClure after Klicker singled to load the bases with no outs. Mackenzie Maples proceeded to greet Stinnett with a two-run knock to left to cut the Middle Tennessee lead to 4-2. With runners on first and second and still none out, Stinnett was able to prevent further damage, getting Lauren Pasquale to ground into a fielder's choice before retiring

Kristy Giragosian and Ashton Jarrett on groundouts to short.

Lizzy Vaughn attempted to spark a rally when she led off the College of Charleston seventh with an infield single. Stinnett bore down and sat down the next three Cougar batters to preserve victory for Middle Tennessee. “Obviously I am proud of how our team battled back to win three games this weekend,” said Middle Tennessee head coach Sue Nevar. “We should lots of resilience and really fought hard and showed what we are capable of doing.” With the victory, the Blue Raiders bettered their record to 3-5 after going 3-1 in this weekend’s tournament. College of Charleston dropped to 7-4. McClure threw five innings, conceding two earned runs on seven hits to collect the win. Klicker received the loss as she gave up four runs (three earned) on five hits in 5.1 innings. Woodruff tallied two hits and three runs batted in and Dever went 3-3 with an RBI to guide Middle Tennessee offensively. The Cougars were led by Maples who picked up a hit in two at-bats and two runs knocked in.

The Blue Raiders will return to the diamond next weekend when they head to Knoxville for the Tennessee Classic which begins on Friday.

Follow the Blue Raider softball team on Twitter @MT_Softball and on Facebook at the MTSU Softball page. Also, stay up-to-date on the team with the latest softball news and information at the “Softball Notebook” page which can be found here.

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