Big innings propel Blue Raiders to 14-5 win at SIU

Four Blue Raiders have three-hit days

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Final Box Score (PDF)
CARBONDALE, Ill. - After falling behind early to Southern Illinois on Tuesday, the Middle Tennessee baseball team put together its most impressive offensive showing of the season with a 14-5 rout of the host Salukis at Abe Martin Field in Carbondale, Ill. Four Blue Raiders recorded three-hit days at the plate and MT (8-4) outhit the Salukis 16-11. "I really like how we played offensively," head coach Steve Peterson said. "We had some big hits, and we did a great job running the bases. There were a lot of guys who played well today, and we just need to keep it going. Southern Illinois is a dangerous ball club offensively, and we'll need to pitch well tomorrow." Johnny Thomas led the way offensively, finishing 3-for-5 with three runs batted in, all coming off a lead-changing home run to left in the fourth inning. The junior also scored three times and swiped a pair of bases. Trent Miller went 3-for-5 too with a towering home run of his own to left, finishing with three runs scored and a pair of RBI. Both Ryan Ford and Hank LaRue also had three-hit days, and Ryan Stephens chipped in two hits as well. The trio proved to be just as effective on base as they were at the plate, combing for six steals. Jordan Cooper got the start on the mound and pitched four innings, allowing four runs (three earned) on seven hits and striking out three. Paul Mittura pitched a hitless fifth and sixth inning to earn his second win of the season, and Daniel Palo and Cody Tollison recorded the last nine outs to close the door. The Salukis (7-5) got things going early with a pair of runs in the first, and the SIU pitching staff made it's way through the line-up the first time without

giving the Blue Raiders much of anything. That all changed in the fourth. Ethan Williams led off with a walk and Miller belted a one-out single a few minutes later to set the stage for Thomas' three-run shot to left. Dalton Henzman was hit by a pitch in the ensuing at-bat, and a well-executed hit-and-run with Stephens moved him to third. Stephens stole second, and induced an errant throw from SIU catcher Luke Mottashed to score Henzman and give MT the 4-2 advantage. The lead was short-lived, however, as SIU threatened to open things up for their side with a rally in the fifth. Jake Welch led off with a single off of LaRue's glove, and Donny Duschinsky doubled put runners on second and third with no outs. Chris Serritella followed up with a single to score one, and a Miller throwing error allowed a second run to cross and moved Serritella to third. Mittura came on in relief and made quick work of the situation, thanks in part to a highlight play by Ford. SIU's Austin Montgomery looked to have a bloop single, but Ford managed a basket catch on the edge of the infield and doubled up Serritella at third. Mittura struck out Jordan Sivertsen to end the frame even at 4-4. MT answered back in the sixth, sending 10 hitters to the plate and scoring six times. Miller and Thomas led off with a pair of singles, and Henzman was hit by a pitch once again to load the bases for Stephens. The sophomore dropped a single into right to hand the lead back to MT. Singles by LaRue and Guidry and a Williams sacrifice fly accounted for the rest of the runs, giving MT a 10-4 lead that would not be challenged. Thomas added another run in the seventh without the ball leaving the infield. The second baseman reached on an infield single to short, stole both second and third and scored on a Dain McNabb groundout. After SIU reclaimed a run in the bottom of the seventh, the Blue Raiders added three more in the eighth. LaRue led off with a single, stole second and scored on a Guidry double down the right field line. Miller followed up with a homer to left, giving MT a season-high 14 runs. The Blue Raiders will now look for a third consecutive series victory on Wednesday when they take on the Salukis once more at Abe Martin Field. Nathan Foriest is scheduled to make his first career start on the mound, and first pitch is slated for 2 p.m.

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