Walk-off win caps dramatic day for Blue Raider Softball

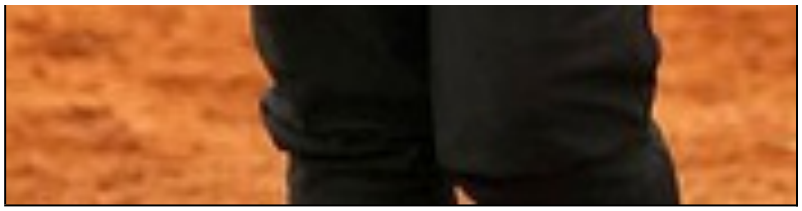
MT with comeback wins over Drake, Eastern Michigan

March 10, 2012 · Athletic Communications

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- Middle Tennessee freshman Laura Dukes stole the show on Saturday as the freshman delivered the game-winning RBIs in the Blue Raiders' 2-1 victory over Drake and 6-5 win against Eastern Michigan at the Lady Bison Classic.

The New Market, Tenn., native began the day by hitting the game winning home run in the top of the seventh to cap a thrilling 2-1 comeback win over Drake. She then was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded in a tie game with Eastern Michigan, sending the Blue Raiders to a 6-5 victory.

The day began against Drake with the Bulldogs jumping out to an early lead. A couple of Blue Raider errors helped allow Lindsey Vande Wall to score the game's first run as Drake took a 1-0 lead in the bottom of the second. The game then turned into a pitcher's duel as Middle Tennessee starter Jordyn Fisherback and Bulldog hurler Jordan Gronewold did not allow a hit from the third through fifth innings. The contest stayed that way until



the top of the sixth when Middle Tennessee tied the game at 1-1. After Samantha Nieves grounded back to the circle and Nina Davenport lined out to left, Nina Dever doubled off the right field wall, just missing a home run. Kayla Toney followed with a two-out double to left field to bring Dever home and tie the game. Drake threatened in the bottom of the frame, putting runners on second and third with one out. Fisherback hung tough, however, and was able to get Liz Buck to pop up to first and Jaimie Duffek to ground out to third to end the inning with the game still tied at 1-1. The dramatics came in the top of the seventh. Kelsey Woodruff fouled out to first and Chelsea Good struck out to lead off the frame. With two outs and none on, Dukes entered as a pinch hitter for Kristi Marquez. The freshman then stepped up to the plate and delivered a towering blast over the right field fence to give the Blue Raiders a 2-1 lead. Dukes was mobbed by her teammates as she reached home plate following the first home run of her career. Fisherback got the Bulldogs in order in the bottom of the seventh to cap the dramatic 2-1 come-from-behind victory for Middle Tennessee. With the win, Middle Tennessee temporarily bettered its record to 4-8 while Drake dropped to 7-14 on the season. Fisherback received the victory as she gave up just one hit and one run (none earned) in seven innings. The loss went to Gronewold who also went the distance, allowing two earned runs on three hits. Dukes was the offensive hero for Middle Tennessee, hitting the game-winning home run in the top of the seventh. Buck provided the Bulldogs with the squad's only hit on the afternoon. In Middle Tennessee's second game of the day, the Blue Raiders did not wait nearly as long to get on the board as the squad built a 2-0 lead in the bottom of the first. Dever and Toney tallied consecutive one-out doubles to score the game's first run. Two batters later, Popham made it 2-0 with an RBI single to score Toney. Eastern Michigan came back with a run of its own in the second when Courtney Nicholson doubled home Nellie Coquillard to cut the Middle Tennessee lead to 2-1. The Eagles then took a 3-2 advantage the following inning. After loading the bases with one out, Blue Raider starter Caty Jutson allowed a pair of walks sandwiched around a strikeout, giving EMU a 3-2 lead. Middle Tennessee tied the game in the bottom of the frame when Popham tallied a two-out run scoring double to score Toney who had reached on a double of her own earlier in the inning. With the game tied at 3-3, both squads went quietly in the fourth and fifth innings. Eastern Michigan then took a 5-3 lead in the sixth on a Lindsay Smith two-out, two-run home run. The Blue Raiders would not go away, however, putting together another dramatic seventh inning. Following a Davenport walk and Dever hit-by-pitch, Toney was intentionally walked to load the bases. Ysais then became the second hit-batter of the inning as Middle Tennessee cut the deficit to 5-4. Ysais was the last batter that pitcher Lindsay Rich would face as the Eagles turned to Jenna Ignowski with the bases still loaded and none out. After Popham was also hit by a pitch to tie the game, Dukes wrapped up the comeback, becoming the fourth Blue Raider to be hit by a pitch in the inning and giving the Blue Raiders a 6-5 win. "I am very proud of how we came back in both games today," said Middle Tennessee head coach Sue Nevar. "This shows how much character this team has and where we are as a team. Now we need to come out and get two more wins on Sunday and continue to build some momentum." Middle Tennessee improved to 5-8 with the victory while Eastern Michigan fell to 6-13. Shelby Stinnett got the win in relief for the Blue Raiders, tossing 4.1 innings while giving up two earned runs on three hits. The loss went to Rich who allowed three earned runs on just one hit in 1.2 innings. Popham went 2-3 with three runs knocked in to power Middle Tennessee at the plate. Smith and Nicholson both collected a pair of RBIs to lead Eastern Michigan. The Blue Raiders will continue play in the Lady Bison Classic

on Sunday when they take on Alabama State at 11 a.m. CT before facing Lipscomb at 3:30 p.m. Live statistics will once again be provided courtesy of Lipscomb and can be accessed on Lipscombsports.com.

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 brand-new “Softball Notebook” page which can be found here.

Printed on May 24, 2013
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/59381