Complete-game shutout highlights Softball doubleheader

MT defeats Alabama State, falls to Lipscomb

March 11, 2012 · Athletic Communications

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- Middle Tennessee pitcher Shelby Stinnett fired the Blue Raiders' second complete game in as many days, leading the Blue Raiders to a 3-0 victory over Alabama State on the final day of the Lady Bison Classic.

The Blue Raiders dropped the second game of the day on Sunday, losing 8-6 to tournament host Lipscomb. Stinnett and Lady Hornet hurler Bailey Patt began the opening game of the day by putting zeros on the scoreboard in the first two frames. The Blue Raiders were able to break through in the bottom of the third. After Samantha Nieves grounded out and Nina Davenport lined out, Nina Dever walked to bring up Kayla Toney with two outs. The Sun Belt's leading hitter continued her torrid start to the 2012 season, unleashing a powerful blast over the center field wall. Kaycee Popham then made it back-to-back bombs with a home run to left-center field to make it 3-0. Alabama State attempted to respond the following inning. With two outs and a runner on second, Mer Frazier singled up the middle. Kim Ross rounded third and attempted to score, but Davenport gunned her

down at the plate with a strike from center field, ending the inning and preserving the 3-0 Middle Tennessee lead. The Blue Raiders threatened again in the bottom of the fifth, putting runners on second and third with two outs. Patt was able to get Popham swinging, however, to end the inning with no runs scored. Sos Toilolo singled to lead off the top of the sixth for the Lady Hornets. Stinnett was able to quickly erase the base runner, though, as she induced Stephanie Hernandez to ground back to the circle, starting a 1-6-3 double play. The right hander then got Meagan Dixon to also ground back to the circle to end the inning. After the Blue Raiders went scoreless in the bottom of the frame, Alabama State once again put the lead-off runner on in the top of the seventh. Brehanna Rodrigues grounded into a fielder's choice before Stinnett prompted another double play, giving Middle Tennessee the 3-0 victory. The Blue Raiders temporarily improved to 6-8 in 2012 while Alabama State dropped its record to 2-16. Stinnett scattered six hits in the complete-game shutout. The defeat went to Patt who surrendered three runs on four hits in six innings. Toney and Popham paced Middle Tennessee at the plate with their third-inning home runs. Alabama State was guided by Frazier who went 2-3 on the afternoon. A day after throwing a complete game against Eastern Michigan, Jordyn Fisherback could not find the same success against Lipscomb. After a pair of walks and an infield single loaded the bases with two outs, Mollie Mitchell cleared the bases with a double to right. Whitney Kiihnl followed with an RBI single to put Lipscomb up 4-0. Caty Jutson was then brought in to relieve Fisherback and got Bree Thurman to strike out to end the inning. The Blue Raiders countered in the top of the second with a run of their own. Popham led off the inning with a walk and advanced to second on a Laura Dukes ground out. Natalie Ysais then brought Popham home on an RBI single to cut the deficit to 4-1. Middle Tennessee had a chance for more, but Davenport grounded out with the bases loaded to end the frame. Lipscomb got another run in the bottom of the inning when Mitchell tallied her second double of the day, bringing home Hayley Elliott to make it 5-1. Middle Tennessee showed its grit as the Blue Raiders tied the game with four runs in the top of the third. Dever got the inning started with a solo shot off the left field foul pole. A Popham single and Ysais walk brought up Kelsey Woodruff with runners on first and second. The former Riverdale High School standout promptly delivered a three-run rocket – also off the left field foul pole – tying the game at 5-5. Middle Tennessee took the lead in the top of the fifth when Popham belted a solo swat over the left-center field wall, giving the Blue Raiders a 6-5 lead. After allowing just one run through her first 3.2 innings pitched, Jutson ran into trouble in the bottom of the fifth. A Thurman RBI double highlighted a three-run frame as Lipscomb retook the lead 8-6. The Blue Raiders would not go away, however, putting the lead-off runner on to begin both the sixth and seventh innings. The squad was unable to get anything across the plate, though, and fell 8-6. The loss dropped Middle Tennessee to 6-9 on the year while Lipscomb bettered its record to 15-6. Kiihnl got the victory for Lipscomb, allowing six earned runs on nine hits over five innings. The loss was tagged to Jutson who went 5.1 innings in relief while giving up four runs (two earned) on seven hits. Dever, Popham and Woodruff each tallied long balls to power Middle Tennessee at the plate. The Lady Bisons were led by Mitchell who went 3-4 with a pair of doubles and four RBIs. "We are definitely coming along as a team," said Middle Tennessee head coach Sue Nevar. "When our bats are not hot, we get a great effort from someone like Shelby Stinnett who did a remarkable job against Alabama State. And I was proud of how we battled back to take the lead in the second game. We just need to eliminate simple mistakes which continue to cost us games." The Blue Raiders will open up their 2012 home schedule on Wednesday when they welcome Eastern Illinois to town for a doubleheader beginning at 1 p.m. CT. Admission is free to all Middle Tennessee softball games.

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

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Printed on December 12, 2013
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/59410