Dever’s RBI single completes Softball comeback

MT splits twin-bill with EIU

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -- Middle Tennessee sophomore Nina Dever singled through the left side to score Nina Davenport from second base to break a 2-2 tie in the bottom of the seventh, giving the Blue Raiders a dramatic 3-2 come-from-behind victory over Eastern Illinois in the second game of a doubleheader on Wednesday afternoon at Blue Raider Field.

The afternoon began with Middle Tennessee starting pitcher Caty Jutson and Panther starter Stephanie Maday trading scoreless innings through the first four frames.

The Blue Raiders were finally able to break the scoreless tie in the bottom of the fifth when pinch runner Bethany Jones scored on a throwing error by EIU third baseman Carly Willert to give Middle Tennessee a 1-0 lead.

The game stayed that way until the Panthers posted two runs in the top of the seventh to take a 2-1 lead. After Willert began the inning with a walk and advanced to second on a sacrifice bunt, Hayley Pieper doubled her home to tie the game. A Brooke Owens pinch-hit infield

single later scored Pieper as EIU took the lead heading to the bottom of the seventh.

Laura Dukes continued her impressive play of late as she led off with a mammoth shot over the center field wall to even the contest at 2-2. Following a Samantha Nieves flyout and a Kristi Marquez groundout, Nina Davenport singled to third base and Kayla Toney walked to set the stage for Dever's dramatic hit.

Middle Tennessee improved to 7-10 with the victory while EIU dropped to 8-10.

The victory went to Jutson who threw all seven innings, allowing only two earned runs on five hits. Maday was credited with the loss as she gave up three runs (two earned) and six hits over 6.2 innings pitched.

Dukes went 2-3 with the game-tying home run in the seventh and Dever tallied the game-winning single while going 1-3 at the plate. Meanwhile Davenport chipped in with two hits of her own while scoring the game-winning run.

The Panthers were paced offensively by Pieper who went 1-3 at the dish with a run driven in.

The first game of the day between the two teams was also a low-scoring affair.

Kelsey Woodruff began the scoring in the bottom of the second with a solo blast to give Middle Tennessee a 1-0 lead. Unfortunately for the Blue Raiders, it would prove to be the only run of the day for the squad.

EIU tallied a run in the top of the third on a Willert infield single which allowed Bailey O'Dell to score from third. The Panthers then took the lead an inning later when Melise Brown drove home Maria Sorrentino, giving EIU a 2-1 lead.

The Blue Raiders threatened in the bottom of the seventh, loading the bases with just one out. However, Jones was thrown out at home plate on a Samantha Nieves fielder's choice and pinch-hitter Shelby Stinnett went down swinging to end the game with the Blue Raiders falling 2-1.

Woodruff led Middle Tennessee at the dish with her fourth home run of the season. EIU was propelled by Brown who went 3-4 with an RBI.

Panther starter Hanna Mennenga recorded the victory, throwing a complete-game while surrendering one earned run on five knocks. The defeat went to Middle Tennessee starter Caitlin McClure as she allowed two runs (none earned) while scattering six hits over 3.1 innings.

"We did not come out ready to play in the first game," said Middle Tennessee head coach Sue Nevar. "We pitched well and played well defensively, but we must start producing in all three facets of the game."

The Blue Raiders will travel to Denton, Texas, this weekend as they begin conference play with a three-game series against North Texas.

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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