Heart-breaking loss concludes tough day for Softball

MT drops pair to North Texas

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DENTON, Texas. -- North Texas first baseman Danielle Hoff hit a walk-off grand slam with two outs in the bottom of the seventh as Middle Tennessee fell to the Mean Green 8-4 in the second game of a doubleheader on Saturday afternoon at Lovelace Stadium.

North Texas entered its half of the final frame down 4-3 after Middle Tennessee tailored a rally of its own in the top of the inning. With two outs, Nina Davenport lined a triple into the right-center field gap. Nina Dever then brought her home when she laced a single down the right field line. Kayla Toney and Kaycee Popham followed with two more singles with the second scoring Dever to give the Blue Raiders a 4-3 lead. Unfortunately the lead would not hold up as the Mean Green scored five runs all with two outs to claim the 8-4 victory. Shelby Stinnett pitched all 6.2 innings, holding North Texas to just three earned runs over the first six innings. However, she was never able to get the final out and ended up being hit with the loss after giving up a total of eight runs and 11 hits. Brittany Simmons picked up the victory for the Mean Green despite getting just a single out while surrendering two hits.

Toney had another successful game at the plate for Middle Tennessee, going 3-4 with a run scored. Davenport, Dever and Popham also tallied a pair of hits as the Blue Raiders collected a total of 11 knocks in the second game of the doubleheader. Meanwhile North Texas had four players pick up at least two hits, not including Hoff who had their biggest hit on the afternoon.

Middle Tennessee dropped its record to 7-12 overall, 0-2 in the Sun Belt while North Texas improved to 10-14, 2-3.

The opening game of the doubleheader was a different story as the Blue Raiders fell into a huge early hole.

After putting a run on the board in the first, North Texas posted seven runs in the second to take an 8-0 lead. The wild inning featured three illegal pitches and five Mean Green hits, the biggest being Maddelyn Fraley's three-run home run.

After North Texas added a pair in the third to increase its lead to 10-0, the Blue Raiders recorded a couple of runs in the top of the fourth to cut into the lead. Popham doubled and Laura Dukes singled to put runners on first and third with one out. Two batters later Natalie Ysais notched a two-out single to score Popham. An error by North Texas shortstop Brooke Foster allowed Dukes to score the squad's second run to make it a 10-2 game.

Despite putting a couple of runners on in the fifth, the Blue Raiders were unable to scratch together a run, falling 10-2 in five innings.

"They simply outhit us today," said Middle Tennessee head coach Sue Nevar. "They created opportunities and capitalized on them and we didn't. We have to come out tomorrow and score when we have chances."

Caty Jutson was attributed the loss in Game 2 following working 1.1 innings and giving up six earned runs on eight hits. The win went to Simmons who allowed two runs (one earned) in four innings.

Dukes collected two hits in three at-bats with a run scored to lead Middle Tennessee offensively. North Texas was led by Foster and Fraley as both knocked in three runs.

The Blue Raiders will aim to get back on track on Sunday when the two squads meet in the series finale at noon CT.

Continue to follow the Blue Raiders all weekend as the team's road trip is chronicled on Twitter (@MT_Softball) and Facebook (MTSU Softball).

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