Late rally gives Blue Raiders third straight win

Thomas knocks in deciding run in the eighth

March 20, 2012 · Athletic Communications

Final Box Score (PDF)

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - An eighth inning two-out rally allowed the Middle Tennessee baseball team to take advantage of some outstanding relief pitching on Tuesday evening as the Blue Raiders secured a 3-1 victory over visiting Tennessee Tech at Reese Smith Jr. Field. "We had some outstanding pitching and defense today," head coach Steve Peterson said. "Johnny Thomas got the big double in the eighth, and then he turned a major league play out there in the top of the ninth. We had every phase working and won a tough and exciting game against an old rival. We're getting timely hits. You could be hitting .300 and losing if you don't get timely hits." After two quick outs to start off the eighth frame, a Trent Miller walk and back-to-back Johnny Thomas and Hank LaRue doubles broke up the 1-1 deadlock to hand Middle Tennessee its third consecutive victory. "We had a couple opportunities that we didn't cash in on," LaRue said. "Fortunately, our pitching staff kept them in check and did a really good job. I was able to hit a change-up that he left up in the zone, and Johnny was able to score on it. I've started to swing the bat a little bit better, but I think I still have a long way to go." LaRue led all Blue Raiders with a two-hit day, and Thomas was 1-for-4 with a run scored and a run batted in. As a team, MT out-hit the Golden Eagles 7-4. Daniel Palo made his first start of the season on the mound, allowing one run on two hits, and Nick Montgomery also gave up a pair of hits over the ensuing two innings. Joey McClung tossed three hitless innings of relief while striking out four to pick up the victory and move to 2-0 this season, and Paul Mittura put together a perfect ninth frame to earn his second save of the season. "It was good to see Palo get out there," Peterson said. "We kept him on a pitch count before going into the pen, and Joey definitely earned the win. He was outstanding today, and he's improved with time. He's gotten stronger and his fastball has more life." "I didn't want to give them anything for free," McClung said. "They were going to have to get a hit if they wanted to get on base, and I had that mindset the whole way. Coach McLaury and I have worked some things out, and I was able to get it going today." TTU started off the scoring in the first when Austin Wulf led off the game with a triple to right center, and Zephan Guyear followed up with a sacrifice fly. The Blue Raiders evened it up in the third. Dain McNabb knocked a stand-up double to right center to lead off the frame. The junior advanced to third on a flyout by Justin Guidry before scoring on an Ethan Williams fielder's choice. TTU's best chance to respond came up fruitless in the fifth. After loading the bases on Montgomery with one out, the senior righthander induced a double play to get out of

the jam. The Golden Eagles would only have two more baserunners for the rest of the game, and neither made it past first base. The Blue Raiders will return to conference play on Friday as they begin a three-game set with Florida Atlantic at Reese Smith Jr. Field. Hunter Adkins will get the start on the mound on Friday, and first pitch is set for 6 p.m.

Printed on March 11, 2014
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/59788