

Pitching propels Softball to doubleheader sweep

Blue Raiders defeat Evansville 5-2 and 1-0

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. --

Middle Tennessee pitchers Caty Jutson and Shelby Stinnett tossed a pair of gems to lead the Blue Raiders to a doubleheader sweep of Evansville on a beautiful Wednesday afternoon at Blue Raider Field.

After Middle Tennessee starter Jordyn Fisherback began the opener by allowing a pair of first-inning runs, Jutson entered with two outs in the frame and went on to throw a masterpiece. The Phoenix, Ariz., native gave up no earned runs on two hits in 6.1 innings as the Blue Raiders claimed a 5-2 victory.

The Purple Aces' only real threat came in the top of the sixth when pinch hitter Kendall Kautz led off the inning with a single up the middle. Pinch runner Niki Rahming was erased one batter later, however, on Kayla Fortner's pop up to Blue Raider first baseman Kaycee Popham which turned into an unassisted double play. Maggie Little followed with another pop-up, this time to second baseman Kayla



Toney, to end the inning with no damage done.

The Blue Raiders scored a pair of runs in both the second and fifth innings before adding a single run in the sixth for a bit of insurance.



Popham began the bottom of the second with an infield single before Natalie Ysais

tallied a single of her own two batters later. Kelsey Woodruff followed with a run-scoring double to right to cut the Middle Tennessee to 2-1. Samantha Nieves' sacrifice fly then tied the game at 2-2.

The Blue Raiders took the lead in the fifth after Woodruff connected on another double, this one coming with one out and none on. Nieves' single put runners on the corners with one out. A wild pitch then allowed Woodruff to score and put Middle Tennessee up 3-2 as Nieves took second base. After Kristi Marquez walked and Nina Davenport flied out, Nina Dever doubled to left to score Nieves and make it a 4-2 game.

Ysais gave the Blue Raiders a 5-2 advantage when she blasted a one-out solo shot to left in the sixth.

The Purple Aces put a runner on with two outs in the top of the seventh, but Jutson shut the door, getting pinch hitter Alli Nolan to fly out to right field to end the game.

The victory went to Jutson while Evansville starter Taylor Perry received the loss, giving up four earned runs on five hits in 4.1 innings.

Woodruff and Ysais both went 2-3 with an RBI to pace Middle Tennessee at the plate. Meanwhile Kayla Fortner provided the Purple Aces with their only offense with a two-run homer in the first.

Even with the wind blowing out to center field, the second game of the day turned into a spectacular pitcher's duel. Stinnett and Evansville starter Emily Morris exchanged zeros all day with the exception of one Blue Raider run which ended up being the difference as Middle Tennessee came away with a 1-0 victory.

Following a scoreless first inning, the Blue Raiders posted the game's only run in the second. Ysais led off the inning by reaching on an error by the shortstop Rhaming. Woodruff then flied out before Ysais moved to second on Nieves' groundout. An error by second baseman Alicia Betancur then allowed Chelsea Good to reach base, putting runners on first and third with two outs. Middle Tennessee then executed a perfect double steal as Good baited the defense with an intentional rundown situation, allowing Ysais to take home and giving the Blue Raiders the only run they would need.

With a 1-0 lead, Stinnett sat the Purple Aces down inning after inning, scattering six hits over seven innings to collect a complete-game shutout. Evansville's lone rally came in the fourth when it loaded the bases with two outs. Stinnett induced catcher Lauren Lum to ground out to second base,

however, ending the frame with Middle Tennessee still holding on to its 1-0 lead.

Morris was every bit as good in the circle for the Purple Aces. After allowing an infield single to Davenport to lead off the game, she retired the final 18 Blue Raiders, completing the game with just one hit allowed over six innings.

Middle Tennessee improved to 9-13 on the season with the win while Evansville dropped to 7-16.

Stinnett collected the win in the circle for Middle Tennessee with her complete-game shutout while Morris was the tough-luck loser, allowing no runs on just one hit in her six innings.

Davenport tallied the only hit on the afternoon for the Blue Raiders. Fortner and Victoria Dellorto both picked up a pair of knocks to guide Evansville at the plate.

The Blue Raiders will continue their homestand this weekend as they welcome UL-Monroe to town for a three-game series beginning with a doubleheader on Saturday at 1 p.m. CT.

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](#).

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