

Bats power softball to 10-2 victory over JSU

MT responds in Game 2 following 8-7 defeat

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JACKSONVILLE, Ala. -- The Blue Raider softball team stroked 15 hits en route to a 10-2 five-inning victory over Jacksonville State in Game 2 of the teams' doubleheader on Tuesday afternoon at University Field.

Middle Tennessee posted three-run frames in the first, second and fourth innings as nine Blue Raiders tallied hits including six who picked up at least two. The Blue Raiders got on the board first when Nina Dever scored from second when Jacksonville State left fielder Krystal Ruth misplayed Natalie Ysais' single. After Kaycee Popham singled, Kelsey Woodruff made it 2-0 with an RBI single up the middle. A passed ball advanced Popham to third before she was brought home on Samantha Nieves' run-scoring single to give Middle Tennessee a 3-0 lead after one half inning. Jacksonville State responded with two runs of its own in the bottom of the frame on Shelby Holley's two-run home run to cut the lead to 3-2. Dever's two-run blast and Popham's solo shot in the second extended the Middle Tennessee lead to 6-2. After Nieves scored an



unearned run on a passed ball in the top of the third to make it 7-2, the Blue Raiders broke the game open with another three-spot in the fourth. Ysais singled to lead off the frame and two batters later Woodruff was hit by a pitch to put runners on first and second with one out. Following a Nieves infield fly, Chelsey Good singled to load the bases with two away for Kristi Marquez. The Del Ray Beach, Fla., product promptly delivered with a bases-clearing double down the left field line to give Middle Tennessee a commanding 10-2 lead. Blue Raider starter Shelby Stinnett meanwhile settled down following the two-run first inning as she limited Jacksonville State to just three hits over the next three innings. Needing a run in the fifth to keep the game going, the Gamecocks put their first two runners on to lead off the inning. Stinnett hung tough, however, as she sat down the next three Jacksonville State batters to preserve the eight-run lead, ending the game with Middle Tennessee picking up the 10-2 win. Stinnett gave up just two earned runs on seven hits to capture the victory and improve to 5-2 on the year. Gamecock starter Savanna Hennings surrendered six earned runs in 1.2 innings of work and was tagged with the defeat. Marquez led a balanced Middle Tennessee attack with her three-run double in the third. Holley's two-run dinger provided the only Jacksonville State scoring in the contest. In the first game of the day, Jacksonville State posted a pair of three-run frames of its own en route to an 8-7 victory. The Gamecocks scored three runs in both the first and third innings and a single run in the second all with two outs to build a 7-3 lead after three innings of play. The teams exchanged runs in the fourth before Middle Tennessee cut the deficit to 8-5 in the top of the fifth on a Ysais solo home run. The game went to the top of the seventh with the Gamecocks maintaining an 8-5 lead. Kayla Toney tallied a one-out RBI double to make it 8-6. Three batters later Toney scored when Woodruff reached on an error by Jacksonville State shortstop Kristin Graham, cutting the Middle Tennessee deficit to 8-7. With runners on first and second and two outs, Laura Dukes was unable to keep the rally going as she grounded out to second base to end the game. "Our offense continues to perform as we put up a combined 17 runs today," said Middle Tennessee head coach Sue Nevar. "We just gave up too many two-out runs today which cannot happen when you are playing a good team." Gamecock starter Tiffany Harbin pitched all seven innings, allowing seven runs (three earned) on seven hits to get the win. The loss went to Middle Tennessee starter Caty Jutson who gave up four runs (one earned) in 1.2 innings pitched. Toney went 2-4 with three runs batted in while Ysais notched her third long ball of the season to pace the Blue Raiders at the plate. Jacksonville State was led by Jessica Guy who went 2-4 with three RBIs. Middle Tennessee closed the day with its record standing at 12-15 overall while the Gamecocks are now 15-17. The Blue Raiders will continue their road stretch when the team travels to Mobile to take on South Alabama for a three-game Sun Belt series beginning Saturday.

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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