

# Softball suffers heartbreaking series finale to No. 7 UL-Lafayette

## Blue Raiders blast three home runs in 4-3 defeat

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**MURFREESBORO, Tenn. --**

A UL-Lafayette two-out double steal of second and home broke a 3-3 tie in the top of the seventh as Middle Tennessee fell to the Ragin' Cajuns 4-3 in Sunday afternoon's series finale.

With the game knotted at 3-3 entering the top of the seventh, Blue Raider starter Caty Jutson walked Christi Orgeron to begin the inning. Matteleine Hack followed by popping up to short before Jutson got Sarah Draheim to hit into a fielder's choice for the second out of the inning. Brianna Cherry then kept the inning alive with a single to right-center which allowed Draheim to take third.

With runners on first and third, the Ragin' Cajuns then executed their second double

steal in as many innings. Cherry broke from first to second, inducing a throw from catcher Natalie Ysais to shortstop Samantha Nieves covering second base. Dreheim then sped from third to home, beating Nieves' throw back to Ysais and giving UL-Lafayette a 4-3 lead which ended up being the final tally.

The afternoon began with UL-Lafayette loading the bases with one out in the top of the first. After Jutson got Haack to fly out to left field, she then hit Draheim with a pitch, allowing each runner to advance a base and giving the Ragin' Cajuns a 1-0 lead.

The Blue Raiders countered with a run of their own in the bottom of the frame on a one-out solo jack off the bat of Nina Dever.



Draheim's sacrifice fly allowed UL-Lafayette to take a 2-1 advantage in the top of the third before Middle Tennessee once again answered in the fourth with another solo shot, this one coming from Kelsey Woodruff.

Jutson surrendered just one Ragin' Cajun hit over the fourth and fifth innings and began the sixth by getting Paige Cormier and Erikka Murphy to ground out for two quick outs. Natalie Fernandez and Katie Smith followed with consecutive infield singles, however, to put runners on first and third with two outs. UL-Lafayette then pulled off the first of their two double steals as Fernandez took home to allow the Ragin' Cajuns to take a 3-2 lead.

Middle Tennessee showed tremendous fight, though, as it once again responded with a run in the bottom of the sixth. Ysais struck out to begin the inning before Kaycee Popham smacked Middle Tennessee's third solo four-bagger over the right field fence to tie the game at 3-3. A Nieves groundout followed by a Laura Dukes fly out to center ended the inning, sending the game to the heartbreaking top of the seventh tied at 3-3.

After UL-Lafayette took the lead in the top of the inning, Ragin' Cajun starter Ashley Brignac sat down the Blue Raiders in order in the bottom of the frame to end the game with Middle Tennessee falling 4-3.

"Despite the loss, I was very impressed with how we came out and competed from the start today," said Middle Tennessee head coach Sue Nevar. "We showed that we can compete with anyone in the country. This is the best effort that I have seen from us in a while and this will give us confidence as we head down the stretch this season."

Middle Tennessee fell to 12-25 overall, 2-10 in the Sun Belt while UL-Lafayette bettered its record to 38-2, 13-2.

Jutson went the distance for Middle Tennessee, allowing just four runs on seven hits but was tagged with the loss. Brignac was the winner as she also pitched all seven innings, giving up three runs on four hits.

Dever, Popham and Woodruff each belted solo home runs to lead the Blue Raider offensive charge. Draheim recorded a pair of RBIs to lead UL-Lafayette.

Middle Tennessee will welcome FIU to Murfreesboro for a Sun Belt midweek three-game series beginning with a doubleheader Tuesday 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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