Williams keys rally for Blue Raiders in extra-inning win at Tennessee Tech

MT overcomes six-run deficit for victory

April 24, 2012 · Athletic Communications

Final Box Score (PDF)

COOKEVILLE, Tenn. - Ethan Williams picked an opportune time for his sixth home run of the season, delivering the game-tying blow as the Middle Tennessee baseball team rallied from a six-run deficit for a 10-7 extra-inning victory over Tennessee Tech on Tuesday night. After Williams' ninth-inning blast, the Blue Raiders scored four in the 10th, including a two-run single from Williams that proved to be the difference-maker. "This was one of those games where it took every single one of us," Williams said. "The 10th inning was huge. It showed us no matter what the score is, if we pull together as a team, we can beat anybody." Along with Williams' 3-for-4, three-RBI performance, Justin Guidry, Trent Miller and Ryan Stephens each had multiple hits in the contest. It was Stephens who drove in the Blue Raiders' first run in the fourth and finished 2-for-3 with two walk, while Miller belted his team-leading 11th home run of the season as part of a 3-for-5, three-RBI day at the plate. Guidry went 3-for-5 and crossed the plate twice. The Blue Raider also picked up key RBI from Hank LaRue. It was LaRue who took a pitch in the leg with the bases loaded in the 10th to give MT its first lead of the game. That came in the at-bat prior to Williams' critical two-RBI single. "In my opinion the biggest play of the game was Hank taking that pitch in the leg," Williams said. "It helped me relax coming up to bat." But it wasn't just the offense outburst, which produced 13 hits, that rallied the Blue

Raiders (24-18) to victory. MT's bullpen proved clutch over the final seven innings, holding the Golden Eagles (17-23) to one run despite stranding nine base-runners during the stretch. Jordan Cooper (1-2) picked up the win for his three shutout innings, as he fanned four and walked two without giving up a hit from the seventh through the ninth. "I'm proud of the way my team came back after a rough start," head coach Steve Peterson said. "They kept their heads and got a good solid win. We put some offense together and bullpen was able to shut them down. Cooper got some very big outs for us to earn that win." The early innings belonged to TTU, though. The Golden Eagles led off the frame with four consecutive hits to score three runs, and capped off the four-spot with another RBI-single to force starter Kooper Kessler from the game. Keaton Baker came on to pick up the final out of the inning. Baker would give up a run in each of the next two innings but struck out four before exiting. Aaron Hyder entered in the third with runners at corners, but fanned Zach Stephens for the final out. Hyder would toss 1.2 scoreless innings, allowing just a pair of hits. Williams' two-out walk and Stephens' base-knock in the fourth finally got the Blue Raiders on the board. Miller continued the rally in the fifth with his blast to left. Guidry had beat out a high infield bouncer for a two-out single before Miller took the first pitch out to make it 6-3. The Blue Raiders inched within a run in the eighth, capitalizing once again on a pair of walks to score two runs. Stephens and Lawrence took back-to-back walks to open the frame and Jordan Rorex was hit by a pitch to load the bases. Johnny Thomas' sac fly to centerfield plated Stephens, then Miller hit a sharp grounder and third baseman Michael Morris was able to knock it down to keep it at an infield single, allowing only Lawrence to score. The Golden Eagles got out of the inning thanks to diving stop by the shortstop to save a hit and preserve the 6-5 lead. After Cooper struck out the side in the bottom of the eighth, TTU's lead disappeared with the first at-bat in the ninth. Williams smoked a 1-1 pitch over the rightfield wall to tie the game. The 10th belonged to the Blue Raiders, as another leadoff walk helped put the go-ahead run across. Thomas took the freebie then made his way to third after another Guidry single and pinch-hitter Andrew Cash knocked fielder's choice bunt that resulted in the bases loaded. LaRue took a pitch to the leg, forcing Thomas home for MT's first lead of the game at 7-6. Williams then delivered the dagger with a base-knock up the middle to open up a three-run cushion. The Blue Raiders tacked on one more run after an error for the 10-6 lead. Paul Mittura came on for the final inning and gave up a home run to account for the final score. The Blue Raiders return home for the next four games, beginning with Vanderbilt on Wednesday. First pitch is slated for 6 p.m. at Reese Smith Jr. Field and 2012 Sun Belt Men's Basketball Player of the Year LaRon Dendy will be on hand to throw out the first pitch.

Printed on March 10, 2014
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/60855