

# Softball explodes for 11-4 victory over Florida Atlantic

## Blue Raiders and Owls split pair

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**BOCA RATON, Fla.** -- Two-run home runs by Kaycee Popham and Kelsey Woodruff highlighted a four-run seventh inning as the Middle Tennessee softball team topped Florida Atlantic 11-4 in the second game of the squads' doubleheader Saturday at the FAU Softball Stadium.

The four-run seventh was the second such inning of the game as the Blue Raiders also scored four in the sixth as part of a 13-hit outburst.

The nightcap began with Middle Tennessee starter Caty Jutson and Owl pitcher Taylor Fawbush exchanging zeros for the first three innings as the squads combined for just three hits.

The Blue Raiders finally broke the scoreless tie with a three-run fourth inning. Nina Dever led off the inning with a double and Popham followed with a single, putting runners on first and third with none out. Middle Tennessee then went up 1-0 when a fake double-steal attempt allowed Dever to take home. Following a Kayla Toney single and a Natalie



Ysais infield pop-up, Chelsea Good singled on the infield to make it 2-0. Another double steal then allowed Toney to



score the third run of the frame, giving Middle Tennessee a 3-0 advantage heading to the bottom of the fourth.

After the Owls got on the board in the bottom of the fifth on a Lindsey Shell RBI single, Middle Tennessee answered with four more runs in the top of the sixth. Toney, Ysais and Woodruff tallied consecutive one-out singles to load the bases with just one away. A wild pitch allowed Toney to score to make it 4-0 before Good's two-run triple to right put the Blue Raiders up 6-1. The Lake Mary, Fla., product scored a play later on Samantha Nieves' grounder to short, giving Middle Tennessee a six-run lead.

An inning later, Middle Tennessee broke the game open with another four runs. Two-run blasts by Popham and Woodruff highlighted the four-run frame as the Blue Raiders took an 11-2 lead.

Florida Atlantic posted a pair of runs in the bottom of the seventh, but they were not nearly enough as Middle Tennessee captured the second game of the doubleheader by an 11-4 score.

Jutson went the distance in Game 2, surrendering four runs (two earned) while scattering 10 hits. Fawbush was deemed the loser despite also going all seven innings, giving up 11 runs (nine earned) on 13 hits.

Popham and Woodruff both went 2-4 with home runs and two runs knocked in while Good knocked in three runs while also going 2-4 at the plate to lead Middle Tennessee offensively. Alexa Ballard paced the Owls at the plate, notching a pair of RBIs.

The evening began with Florida Atlantic composing a four-run first inning en route to a 9-1 five-inning win.

The Blue Raiders' only run of the opener came on Dever's solo blast over the wall in right field to give Middle Tennessee an early 1-0 lead.

Florida Atlantic did not wait long to respond, however, posting four runs in the bottom of the frame. The big blow came on starting pitcher Stephanie Call's three-run home run to right field.

The Owls extended their lead to 5-1 in the bottom of the third. Ballard led off the inning with a single and Call reached on a walk to put runners on first and second with none out. Two batters later Laura Mann doubled to right to score Ballard and give the home team a 5-1 advantage.

The Blue Raiders put runners on in the every inning except for the second but were never able to mount much of a rally as Call limited Middle Tennessee to just six hits in the game.

Four walks, a single and a double led to another three runs for Florida Atlantic in the bottom of the fourth as the Owls went ahead by a 8-1 margin. An inning later they tallied another run on two more hits and two Blue Raider walks. With the eight-run rule in effect, the run ended the game as the Owls took the 9-1 victory.

Middle Tennessee starter Caitlin McClure received the loss in Game 1 as she was only able to record one out while giving up four earned runs on three hits. Call got the win for Florida Atlantic, tossing all five innings while allowing one run on six hits.

Dever's first-inning home run provided the Blue Raiders with their only run. Meanwhile Call also led the way for the Owls at the plate, going 2-3 with a home run and four runs batted in.

At the conclusion of the doubleheader, Middle Tennessee stands at 16-31 overall, 5-16 in Sun Belt play. Florida Atlantic meanwhile is now 15-35, 5-16.

The Blue Raiders and Owls will meet in a key series finale Sunday at 11 a.m. CT.

Fans are encouraged to follow the team's Twitter (@MT\_Softball) and Facebook (MTSU Softball) pages during their trip this weekend to Boca Raton as behind-the-scenes pictures and videos will be uploaded to the sites throughout the weekend.

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