Williams blasts walk-off homer in Blue Raider victory over Arkansas State

Junior goes 3-for-5 with a pair of home runs

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Final Box Score (PDF)

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - With the Middle Tennessee baseball team trailing 3-0 in the fifth on Sunday afternoon, Ethan Williams belted a two-run home run to get the Blue Raiders back into the game, and six innings later, the junior repeated the feat in walk-off fashion to cap a 5-3 victory over visiting Arkansas State at Reese Smith Jr. Field. "I was looking fastball, and he threw me one," Williams said. "He had just thrown a curveball in the dirt, and I was pretty confident in sitting on a fastball because I thought I had gotten the timing down on it. It was just a great day to hit. It wasn't just me. We had 16 hits. The whole line-up was swinging the bat pretty well." "This was the biggest win of the season for us," head coach Steve Peterson said. "We needed it, and I them that if there's more to come, they'll be bigger than this. We talked about must-wins, and we had to have it. It was a huge day." Williams, a transfer from Columbia State, ended 3-for-5 with four runs batted in, and recorded the second multi-homer game of his career to put an exclamation on an outstanding week for the first baseman. In Tuesday's win at Tennessee Tech, Williams helped rally the Blue Raiders from a 6-0 deficit with ninth-inning game-tying solo blast. MT went on to win 10-6 in 10 innings. Six Blue Raiders also recorded two or more hits, helping MT (25-21, 11-10) out-hit the Red Wolves 16-8. Both Trent Miller and Justin Guidry joined Williams with three-hit days of their own. On the mound, Jonathan Sisco

gave up three runs in four innings of work, but Jordan Cooper was able to silence the ASU offense from there on out, allowing just one hit over a career-best 6.2 innings. "I struggled a bit with my location early," Cooper said. "But I really settled down after that, and it does a great deal for my confidence going forward. I think this also gives our team a lot of confidence. We needed something to turn it around, and we battled to get a win here." It appeared as if MT was going to get going early, but couldn't push a run across after loading the bases with one out in the opening frame. ASU (23-19, 12-7 SBC) made the Blue Raiders pay for the missed opportunity two innings later in the third. Michael Faulkner led off with a bunt single and Logan Uxa homered to right to give the Red Wolves the 2-0 advantage. The Blue Raiders stranded three more before the visitors tallied another score in the fifth. Zach Maggio and Zach George singled to start the frame, and back-to-back deep flyouts allowed the run across. Guidry helped MT get back on track with a one-out single in the bottom of the frame, setting the stage for Act One of Williams' heroics, which saw the junior send a 2-1 pitch over the wall in right to pull the Blue Raiders within one. ASU wouldn't have the chance to get back into it, as Cooper was rolling. The junior left-hander had retired eight consecutive before finally conceding his first hit in the eighth. It ultimately proved fruitless for the Red Wolves, as Cooper managed to induce a groundout and strikeout to end the threat. The offense returned the favor in the bottom of the frame. Johnny Thomas laced a double to center, and a Ryan Ford bunt single coupled with a George fielding error plated Thomas for the equalizer. Cooper was still untouchable over the next two frames, putting down the side in order in both the ninth and 10th frames before leaving the mound after Stuart Levy reached on a two-out walk in the 11th. Kooper Kessler and Nathan Foriest both came on in relief to record the final out, with Foriest getting out of a bases-loaded jam thanks to a highlight defensive play at third by Hank LaRue. Foriest picked up the victory to improve to 2-2 on the season. Rorex led off the bottom half of the frame with a walk, and Williams capped off his fantastic day two batters later, unloading on a 1-0 pitch and sending towering over the wall in right. The win was the eighth consecutive for the Blue Raiders on L.D. Agee Optimist Little League Day at Reese Smith Jr. Field. Prior to first pitch, hundreds of youth baseball players from the region were honored with an on-field parade. MT will look to build on the victory when they continue conference play next week to take on FIU in Miami. The trip is the first for the Blue Raiders to FIU Baseball Stadium since 2008.

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