Softball bats kept quiet in doubleheader defeats

Blue Raiders fall to WKU 4-0 and 10-1

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -- The Middle Tennessee softball team was able to tally just a single run on Saturday as the Blue Raiders fell to Western Kentucky 4-0 and 10-1 in the squads' doubleheader at Blue Raider Field.

Senior Natalie Ysais' RBI double in the bottom of the sixth in Game 2 provided Middle Tennessee with its only run of the day despite notching eight hits in the second game after getting five knocks in the opener.

Western Kentucky got on the board in the opener with a two-run second inning. Amanda Thomas and Amanda Walden led off the frame with consecutive singles and they were brought home on Preslie Cruce's single up the middle to make it 2-0.

The Lady Toppers increased their lead to three in the top of the fourth when Olivia Watkins doubled home Walden who had reached with a double of her own earlier in the inning. Two innings later Thomas belted a solo home run over the right field fence to give Western Kentucky a 4-0

advantage.

Middle Tennessee's only serious threat of the game came in the bottom of the fifth. Kelsey Woodruff, Kristi Marquez and Nina Davenport each registered singles, loading the bases with two outs. Western Kentucky starter Emily Rousseau struck out Nina Dever, however, keeping the Blue Raiders off the scoreboard.

Samantha Nieves attempted to ignite a rally in the seventh with a one-out single to right. Marquez flied out to right and Davenport grounded out to short to end the game, though, with the Blue Raiders falling 4-0.

Middle Tennessee pitcher Caty Jutson received the loss despite going all seven innings while allowing four earned runs. Rousseau collected a complete-game shutout, giving up just five hits and two walks on the afternoon to get the victory.

Woodruff was one of five Blue Raiders to record one hit in Game 1 to lead the squad at the plate. Cruce meanwhile went 2-3 with a pair of runs knocked in for Western Kentucky.

The Lady Toppers carried their momentum into Game 2 as they took a 2-0 lead in the top of the first. Karavin Dew's RBI single followed by Thomas' sacrifice fly gave the visitors an early two-run advantage.

Western Kentucky then extended their lead to 6-0 with a four-run third inning. After Walden singled home Kelsie Mattox for the squad's third run, Thomas hit a three-run homer to left to make it 6-0.

After Watkins made it 7-0 with an RBI single in the fifth, Western Kentucky broke the game open with another three runs in the sixth. Dew, Walden and Mallorie Sulaski each recorded run-scoring singles to effectively put the game out of reach at 10-0.

Needing three runs in the bottom of the sixth to keep the game going, Kayla Toney led off with a single and scored on Ysais' double to cut it to 10-1. Middle Tennessee failed to scratch together another run, though, losing 10-1 in six innings.

"Our offense simply did not show up today," said Middle Tennessee head coach Sue Nevar. "We could not get anything going at the plate. And we did not pitch well enough to win either. This was definitely a very disappointing day."

The loss went to Shelby Stinnett who gave up six runs (four earned) in 2.1 innings pitched. Sulaski picked up the win for the Lady Toppers, allowing just the one sixth-inning run while scattering eight hits over her six innings.

Ysais supplied Middle Tennessee with its only run while Kaycee Popham and Davenport both recorded a pair of hits in Game 2. Thomas went 1-3 with four RBIs and a run scored to lead Western Kentucky at the dish.

The Blue Raiders fell to 16-33 overall, 5-18 in conference following the pair of defeats. Western Kentucky bettered its record to 31-23-1, 11-12-1.

Please stay tuned to the teams' Facebook and Twitter pages as well as GoBlueRaiders.com as we

await the official release of the Sun Belt Tournament bracket Sunday evening.

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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