Cooper picks up win in 4-2 victory over Louisiana

Blue Raiders to play doubleheader on Saturday

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Final Box Score (PDF)

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Jordan Cooper made his first career conference start on Friday night, and the junior left-hander didn't disappoint, tossing 6.2 innings and allowing just two runs to help the Blue Raiders to a 4-2 victory over visiting Louisiana at Reese Smith Jr. Field. "Cooper has been throwing well recently," head coach Steve Peterson said. "His relief appearances have been good, and he had one where he went more than six innings, so his pitch count wouldn't be a problem. The key with Jordan is throwing strikes. He gave us a great effort and deserved to get the win." Cooper allowed five hits and struck out four in his first start since April 11, improving to 2-2 on the season. "I just knew that if I could keep the ball in the zone, we'd get a win tonight," Cooper said. "We've been hitting it well enough to get a win all year, I just had to throw strikes. I don't think I had my best stuff, but I located my fastball pretty well tonight. I think these last few outings are really helping my confidence." Mittura and McClung came on to throw a scoreless final 2.1 innings with McClung earning his fifth save of the year. Offensively, the Blue Raiders (27-23, 13-12 Sun Belt) out-hit the Ragin' Cajuns 7-6, led by two-hit days from both Justin Guidry and Ryan Ford. MT opened up the scoring in the second, with Robert Lawrence striking out but reaching base on passed ball by UL catcher Chris Sinclair. Ryan Stephens followed up with a single to right, and a two-base fielding error by Dylan Butler allowed Lawrence to cross. Jordan Rorex pulled off a successful squeeze play in the ensuing at-bat, bunting down the third base line and scoring Stephens to give MT the 2-0 lead. The Ragin' Cajuns (21-27, 9-16 SBC) pulled back within one in the fifth. Logan Preston led off with a single, and moved into scoring position on a sacrifice bunt. Brian Bowman knocked in the run in the next at-bat with a single to left. Guidry got the Blue Raiders going again in the sixth with a one-out single to center. LaRue grounded out to advance Guidry, and Trent Miller pushed a single through the left side in the next at bat to give MT a 3-1 advantage. UL had its best chance to pull even in the seventh. After Cooper picked up a pair of quick outs, a single

and a walk chased the Knoxville native from the mound to make way for Paul Mittura. The sophomore gave up a double down the left field line, but a perfect relay by Rorex and Ford kept the equalizing run from crossing home. "I was pumped. That's probably one of my favorite plays in baseball," Ford said. "I love getting a chance to throw someone out at the plate. Rorex played it well in left. It can be tricky with those ridges on the wall in the outfield, but he got to it quickly and made a good throw to me." "That's something we practice every week," Peterson said. "It starts with the outfielder playing the ball off the wall, and he has to make an accurate throw to have a shot at the plate. Rorex did a great job at giving Ryan an angle at the plate with his throw, and Ryan threw a perfect strike to Dain McNabb. It's a great team play." Lawrence helped MT pick up an insurance run in the bottom half of the frame, leading off with a double down the left field line. The junior later stole third, and an errant throw by Sinclair allowed him to score his second unearned run of the night. The Blue Raiders and the Ragin' Cajuns will square off again on Saturday with a doubleheader at Reese Smith Jr. Field, set to begin at 2 p.m. Prior to first pitch, MT will celebrate Senior Day.

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