

Baseball rallies in ninth, comes up short at WKU

Game two first pitch slated for 6 p.m. Friday

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[Final Box Score \(PDF\)](#)

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. -

Middle Tennessee's ninth-inning rally came up short against WKU on Thursday as the Hilltoppers claimed a 4-2 victory in the series opener at Nick Denes Field. Robert Lawrence went 2-for-3 on the day, while Hank Larue and Jordan Rorex each drove in a run. WKU pushed a run across in each of the first two innings, scoring on an RBI-single and bases-loaded hit-by-pitch for the early 2-0 lead. In the meantime, starter Austin Clay (4-4) held the Blue Raiders at bay for five innings before exiting after the sixth. Clay allowed one run on three hits but didn't strike out a batter in the victory. He combined with closer Taylor Haydel, who picked up his third save, to retire 14 Blue Raiders in a row from the fifth until Justin Guidry's ninth-inning single ended the streak. "I have to compliment Clay," head



coach Steve Peterson said. "He did an outstanding job of changing speeds and having movement on every pitch, and we didn't adjust." The Blue Raiders cut the deficit in half in the fifth, getting on the board after capitalizing on a pair of sacrifices. Trent Miller and Lawrence led off the inning with back-to-back singles before Johnny Thomas advanced both runners with sacrifice bunt. Rorex plated a run with a deep fly to right to make it 2-1. The Hilltoppers recovered the run in the bottom half of the frame and tacked on an unearned run in the next inning for the 4-1 advantage. Ivan Hartle led off the fifth with a single and Casey Dykes ripped a two-out double to score a run. WKU capitalized on

an MT miscue in the next inning, as Devin Kelly singled, stole second and moved to third when the throw down from catcher Dain McNabb sailed into centerfield. Blake Crabtree's sac fly made it a three-run cushion. Down to the final strike of the game, Guidry smacked a base-hit up the middle then took second on defensive indifference. The move paid off when as LaRue followed with a base-knock to right, bringing the Blue Raiders within two before the Hilltoppers managed to pick up the final out. Jordan Cooper (2-3) took the loss after tossing 1.2 innings and giving up two runs on three hits in the start. The bullpen combined for a solid relief effort from Daniel Palo, Jonathan Sisco and Kooper Kessler, allowing two runs, only one earned over the final 6.1 frames. The two teams will square off again Friday at 6 p.m. and Hunter Adkins will take the mound for MT against WKU's Tim Bado. Dick Palmer and John Callow will have the call on WMOT 89.5.

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