

Mittura's career day leads Blue Raiders to win over Trojans

MT awaits result of Arkansas State-FIU game

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

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. -

Relief pitcher Paul Mittura delivered a career-best performance in the Middle Tennessee baseball team's 8-5 victory over the sixth-seeded Troy Trojans in an elimination game of the Sun Belt Championship on Saturday afternoon at the Bowling Green Ballpark. Mittura (4-1) tossed 5.1 innings, the longest outing of his career, and gave up an unearned run on three hits while fanning a career-high four batters to pick up his fourth win of the season. No. 7 seed MT (31-28) now awaits the result of the game between No. 2 seed Arkansas State and No. 3 seed FIU. An FIU win would put the Blue Raiders into Sunday's title game against No. 5 seed ULM at 1 p.m. If Arkansas State wins, MT's season would come to a close due to the league's tiebreaker rules. In



addition to Mittura's solid performance, the Blue Raiders came through with timely hits and aggressive base-running, scoring five of the eight runs with two outs and stealing five bases in the contest. Justin Guidry finished 3-for-5 with an RBI and a pair of runs, while Robert Lawrence was 2-for-3 with two runs, an RBI and three key stolen bases. "That was a big one and now we just have to let the cards fall, but we did our part," Mittura said. "The two-out hitting today was unbelievable. It really gave our team a chance. Showing that we could come back from being behind by a couple of runs was a big deal. When we're playing like this, we're really fun to watch." Trent Miller's only hit

of the day proved to be the difference-maker in the contest, as his three-run blast in the first gave MT the 3-0 lead. Guidry singled and Hank LaRue took a walk before Miller belted a 3-2 pitch over the leftfield wall for his 13th homer of the season, chasing Troy starter Jeremy McGowan from the contest after just one-third of an inning. "We jumped on (Troy) with the big hit, but we knew they were going to come back," head coach Steve Peterson said. "They were one of the toughest teams this season, and we knew this was going to be a tough game. Paul really put together his top game and I'm proud of my club. Now we'll just wait and see what happens." The Trojans (28-30) rallied for a pair of runs in the second, then took the lead in the third with two more runs. A leadoff double and one-out triple provided the tying run, and Danny Collins' RBI-single gave Troy the lead, forcing MT starter Hunter Adkins out in favor of Mittura. Adkins went 2.1 innings and gave up four runs on six hits with one strikeout. The Trojans took the 5-3 advantage after capitalizing on an MT error in the fourth, but it was the last run they would muster as Mittura and Joey McClung combined to shut out Troy over the next five innings, allowing just two hits during the span. The Blue Raiders bounced back with a run in the bottom of the fourth thanks in part to Lawrence's leadoff infield single. Lawrence stole second and third, then scored on Dain McNabb's base-knock up the middle to cut the deficit to one. A one out-walk to LaRue resulted in the equalizing run for MT in the fifth. LaRue stole second, then made his way home on Lawrence's rip to center. Lawrence followed suit to score the go-ahead run, swiping his third base of the day and charging home on Johnny Thomas' base-hit to right. Guidry and LaRue gave the Blue Raiders a couple of insurance runs in the sixth. After Ryan Ford reached on a fielder's choice, Guidry plated him with two-bagger to the right-center gap, then LaRue laced a single to right for the 8-5 lead. In all, MT tagged Troy's Thomas Austin (3-5) for four runs, all earned, on six hits as he took the loss. McClung closed out the final 1.1 innings to pick up his sixth save of the season, retiring four of the five batters he faced.

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