Softball drops two on Day 1 of Red and Blue Classic

Dukes highlights offense with fourth home run of the season

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UT-Martin Box Score (PDF) | Drake Box Score (PDF)

OXFORD, Miss. - Middle Tennessee's early season woes continued on Friday at the Red and Blue Classic. MT fell to UT-Martin, 7-2, and Drake, 3-2.

In Game 1, MT (0-7) managed just three hits in the contest, compared to 10 for UT-Martin (6-3).

Jordyn Fisherback drops to 0-3 on the season after allowing five runs (three earned) on seven hits, and striking out three. Shelby Stinnett threw the final two innings, allowing two runs on three hits.

Katie Brown, Samantha Nieves and Laura Dukes mustered the only hits for the Blue Raiders. Brown and Dukes finished 1-for-3 while Nieves was 1-for-1 with a walk and an RBI. Nina Dever had MT's other RBI.

After falling behind 3-0 through the first 2.5 innings, MT's Kayla Toney reached on a fielder's choice, then stole second later in the inning. With two outs, Nieves doubled to center, allowing Toney to score.

Trailing 5-1 in the bottom of the sixth, Nieves drew a lead-off walk, followed by a single up the middle by Dukes. After Nina Davenport replaced Dukes on the basepaths, Kristi Marquez grounded out to the pitcher, but advanced Dukes and Davenport on the play. Dever then grounded to second, scoring Dukes and pushing Davenport to third. With two outs, Ashley Stassin pinch hit for LaRi Mitchell, but struck out swinging to end the threat.

Stinnett started the second game of the day, and threw 5.2 innings, allowing just two unearned runs on two hits and striking out batters for Drake (7-4).

Caitlin McClure threw the final 0.2, dropping to 0-2 on the season after allowing one run in the seventh inning.

Offensively, Dukes was 1-for-2 at the plate with a home run and walk, while Dever was 1-for-3 with a run. Niki Campbell also tallied her first collegiate hit in the loss.

In the top of the third, Brown led off with a walk and MT put runners on the corners when Toney reached on a fielder's choice and DU's Amy Pierce made a fielding error. After Toney stole second, Dukes worked a two-out walk to load the bases, but Marquez struck out swinging to end the inning.

DU threatened in its half of the third, as Lindsey Vande Wall led off with a single and moved around to third on a throwing error and a groundout. With one out, Pierce hit a ground ball to third base, where Marquez tossed it home and Dukes tagged Vande Wall out at the plate.

MT finally broke the stalemate in the fourth, when Dever led off with a double to right field, and then moved to third on a sacrifice bunt by Mitchell. Niki Campbell then singled through the left side, picking up her first RBI of her career, and putting MT ahead, 1-0.

Dukes added the second run of the game in the fifth inning, when she took a 0-1 pitch over the right-center wall for her fourth home run of the season.

After Drake tied the game in the sixth, the Bulldogs clinched the game the seventh when Pierce led off with a single, then stole second base before scoring the game-winning run on Zeah Peterson's single.

MT will play Mississippi Valley State at 8 a.m. and McNeese St. at 7:15 p.m. tomorrow on Day 2 of the Red and Blue Classic. All times are Central.

For Live Stats, please follow the links on the tournament page, located here.

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