Thomas' home run, Adkins' gem lifts Blue Raiders past Auburn

Second baseman hits first homer of season

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Box Score (PDF)

AUBURN, Ala. - Johnny Thomas belted a two-run home run and Hunter Adkins tossed another gem as the Middle Tennessee baseball team handed Auburn its first loss of the season with a 2-1 victory on Saturday morning at Plainsman Park.

It marked the first win for MT (3-2) over Auburn (4-1) since Feb. 20, 1999 and just the third in program history.

Adkins went eight innings for the second straight start, allowing one run in the first before shutting out the Tigers over the next seven innings. He struck out five and allowed one run on three hits to move to 2-0 on the year. Adkins gave way to Paul Mittura in the ninth, who picked up his second save of the season after working out of a bases loaded jam to preserve the win.

Thomas accounted for both RBI with his first home of the season, as he now has the game-winning RBI in all three of the Blue Raiders' games this year.

It was Auburn who scored the first run, though, capitalizing on leadoff walk to open the bottom of the first. Jackson Burgreen took the walk, made his way to second on a balk and to third on a wild pitch before charging home on a grounder to second for the 1-0 lead.

Following the leadoff walk, the Tigers scattered just three hits over the next seven innings. At one stretch from the third to the eighth, Adkins retired 16 of 17 batters. Burgreen's two-out single in the eighth ended the streak, but was quickly erased with a batter's interference call on a throw to second to end the inning.

The score remained 1-0 over the next seven frames until Thomas delivered the game-winning blow in the top of the eighth. After pinch-hitter Trevor Haggard reached on a two-out error, forcing Tiger

starter Daniel Koger from the game, Thomas turned around to the left side of the plate to face Terrance Dedrick (1-1) and took a 1-0 pitch over the rightfield wall for the 2-1 lead.

Koger exited after seven innings of work, giving up one run, which was unearned, and striking out six. Dedrick took the loss, throwing just 16 pitches in the contest.

Auburn made things interesting in the ninth thanks in part to a leadoff walk to Ryan Tella. Mittura entered the contest with Tella at first and threw eight pitches to clean-up batter Garrett Cooper before striking him out, but a hit batter and catcher's interference loaded the bases for the Tigers. Mittura induced a high pop to second to hold the runners for out number two and a flare to short to cap the victory.

The Blue Raiders return to the field at 6 p.m. to take on Indiana State. Lefthander Johnathan Frebis will take the mound for MT.

HEAD COACH JIM MCGUIRE
On Hunter Adkins...
"He had a little bit of trouble in the first inning, but really after that he settled down. He did an outstanding job again. He competed well, and it's been fun to watch him pitch in the early going."

On the ninth...
Paul got the big strikeout when he came in and then he hit the next guy and kind of opened the door. But after that he made some huge pitches to get out of it and get the save.

On Johnny Thomas...
"He's really improved himself offensively in his approach and what he's trying to do at the plate. I have confidence to hit him in the three-hole, and I think he's coming on."

On Koger...
"You're playing against an SEC team against their No. 1 guy. He kept us off-balance. We had opportunities and we're striking out too much, but I was proud of the way we battled, came back and stayed in it."

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