Blue Raiders overcome six-run deficit to top Tennessee Tech

Adkins goes 4-for-4 with four runs

February 26, 2013 · @MTAthletics

COOKEVILLE, Tenn. -

Catcher Michael Adkins' 4-for-4 day and centerfielder Ryan Stephens' three-RBI day combined with the Middle Tennessee bullpen to overcome a six-run deficit and capture the 9-7 win over Tennessee Tech on Tuesday evening at Bush Field.

The Blue Raiders (6-2) reeled off their fourth-straight win as



Adkins crossed the plate four times on the day. Stephens went 2-for-4 with a pair of doubles, driving in the game-winning run in the seventh.

The MT bullpen shut out the Golden Eagles (4-4) over the final seven innings, led by Jordan Cooper's 3.2 innings. Cooper picked up the win after giving up just one hit during the stretch. He retired six in a row from the sixth into the eighth, striking out four in a row at one point.

The Golden Eagles quickly jumped out to a 4-0 lead with a four-run first. An error to open the frame proved costly as TTU scored three unearned runs. Zach Stephens hit a two-run shot to put the first runs on the board, and three consecutive two-out hits gave the Golden Eagles another pair of runs.

MT got one back in the top of the second as designated hitter Hank LaRue plated a run with a sac fly following Adkins' leadoff single, but TTU responded with a three-spot in the bottom of the inning to make it a 7-1 game. The Golden Eagles capitalized on a hit batter and three consecutive two-out walks to score one, then added two more on a double from Michael Morris.

The Blue Raiders inched back with a run in the third on a two-out walk to second baseman Johnny Thomas and back-to-back singles from first baseman Trent Miller and Adkins, then cut the deficit to one with four runs in the sixth. Adkins collected his third single of the day to get the offense rolling, with rightfielder Jake Ellison and third baseman Robert Lawrence making it three straight base-hits to load the bases. LaRue drove in his second run of the day on a groundout and Stephens' double to right field plated two more to make it a two-run contest. With Stephens at third after an error, leftfielder Trevor Haggard snuck one through the right side to bring the Blue Raiders within a run.

Lawrence delivered the tying run in the seventh with a base-knock. It was Adkins who took a leadoff

walk and crossed the plate for the third time. It marked the third time on the day he led off an inning, reaching base all three times and in all five plate appearances in the game.

Lawrence would score the go-ahead run later in the frame as Stephens hit a gapper to left-center for a double. The Blue Raiders would make it a two-run cushion in the eighth thanks in part to Adkins' fourth single and fourth run of the day. Following Adkins' two-out base-hit, Ellison doubled to left past a diving Austin Wulf, allowing the catcher to score from first for the 9-7 lead.

While MT's offense heated up, so did the bullpen. Aaron Hyder gave up two hits in 2.1 innings, followed by a solid outing from Cooper. Garrett Ring also came on in the eighth with two runners on and picked up a strikeout for the final out of the frame before giving way to Paul Mittura in the ninth. Mittura threw two pitches to induce a game-ending double play and pick up his fourth save of the contest.

MT returns home for the next nine games, beginning with a weekend series against Kennesaw State. The Blue Raiders and Owls will meet at 3 p.m. on Friday at Reese Smith Jr. Field.

HEAD COACH JIM MCGUIRE

On the comeback win...

"There was just no panic. We were frustrated at the beginning for sure. But once we got things settled down and Aaron Hyder got in the game, we started putting up some zeroes. Then we started swinging the bat better. We just grinded out a win and had a good effort all the way around. It was a good team win. To come from behind, being down 7-1 and come back and win says a lot about our team."

On the bullpen...

"We were just trying to find somebody to stop them. It all started with Aaron Hyder, and he's done a very good job. He kept it right there, then Jordan Cooper, what a job he did coming in. (Garrett Ring) came in and got the big strikeout and Paul (Mittura) did his thing at the end, so it was a very solid pitching effort after the second, and I'm very proud of what those guys did coming out of the pen."

On Jordan Cooper...

"He was able to get in that groove tonight. His confidence started to take off, and he did way more than I expected. He just kept going and everybody feeds off that."

On Michael Adkins...

"He is really swinging the bat well right now. We decided to move him up in the lineup because he's been one of our most consistent guys. He was definitely the right man in the right spot tonight and got some big hits for us. He had an outstanding night."

Printed on December 9, 2013

Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/66132