

# Blue Raiders win seventh-straight with weekend sweep of Kennesaw State

## Seven-game winning streak is longest in five years

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### MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

The Blue Raider baseball team extended its winning streak to seven games after completing the weekend sweep of Kennesaw State with a pair of victories on Sunday at Reese Smith Jr. Field. Middle Tennessee knocked off the Owls, 5-2, in game one and finished off the day with a 6-1 win.

The winning streak is the longest since 2008 when MT (9-2) also reeled off seven straight from April 8-16.

### GAME ONE

The Middle Tennessee baseball team recorded nine hits in a 5-2 win on Sunday in the first game of a doubleheader at Reese Smith Jr. Field.

A full recap of the day will be available following the conclusion of game two.

Johnathan Frebis (2-0) earned the win after he pitched seven strong innings, giving up only one run while allowing three hits and striking out two. He has gone at least six innings in each of his first three starts this season.

Trevor Haggard finished 2-for-4 at the plate with one RBI and one run on the afternoon. Jake Ellison was 1-for-3 with two RBI after his two-run home run in the seventh inning. Johnny Thomas was 1-for-3 with one RBI.

The Blue Raiders got on the board early when Haggard led off with a triple in the first inning. Thomas stepped to the plate moments later and singled through the left side, scoring Haggard from third and giving MT the early 1-0 lead.

In the fifth inning, Jordan Rorex singled up the middle and moved all the way to third after an error



when he stole second. Haggard again came to the plate and singled up the middle, scoring Rorex.

The Blue Raiders got their bats going again in the seventh when Michael Adkins led off with a single to shortstop. Ellison stepped to the plate with no outs and blasted a two-run home run over the left field wall, his second long-ball of the season.

Still in the seventh with Robert Lawrence on second base, Ryan Stephens doubled up the middle and Lawrence rounded third to score and increase the Blue Raiders lead to 3-1.

Kennesaw State was able to put five hits on the board but only bring two runs across the plate.

A RBI single in the fifth and another in the eighth were the only runs the Owls could score against solid pitching from the Blue and White.

Kevin Kyle (1-2) took the loss after he pitched 6.1 innings, allowing eight hits and five runs after facing 26 batters.

## GAME TWO

Middle Tennessee used strong pitching and kept their bats alive to defeat Kennesaw State 6-1 in game two of the doubleheader Sunday afternoon at Reese Smith Jr. Field.

The Blue Raiders (9-2) outscored the Owls, 22-4, in the series on the way to their best start since 2009.

Zac Curtis (2-1) had five innings of strong pitching to pick up the victory, allowing just three hits and one run while fanning five.

Ryan Ford went 2-for-4 on the day and added one RBI, while Johnny Thomas and Trent Miller both had 1-for-4 outings with a pair of RBI.

The Blue Raiders were productive early yet again when Thomas stepped to the plate in the first inning and tripled to left field, scoring Trevor Haggard from third. Miller struck a single through the right side in the next at-bat and Thomas rounded third to make it 2-0 in the first inning.

MT left the first inning in each game of the three-game series against Kennesaw State with at least one run on the board.

In the second inning, Haggard's grounder to second scored Ryan Stephens for the 3-0 lead.

Ford got things going again in the fourth inning when his single up the middle brought Stephens in from third and put runners at second and third. Johnny Thomas then reached on a fielder's choice and Dain McNabb was able to score on a throwing error by the third baseman.

The last run of the fourth came when Miller grounded out to second base and Haggard touched home to put the Blue Raiders up 6-0.

Kennesaw State (6-6) saw its only run of the afternoon scored in the sixth inning when Clint Wynn doubled down the right field line and Peyton Hart crossed the plate from third to end the shutout.

Owls starting pitcher Will Solomon (1-1) took the loss after he threw just 3.1 innings of work before a

change was made. He allowed six hits and six runs, only four of which were earned, and struck out two in 19 batters faced.

The Blue Raiders continue the nine-game homestand Tuesday when they host Lipscomb at Reese Smith Jr. Field with the first pitch slated for 3 p.m.

#### HEAD COACH JIM MCGUIRE

On today's games...

"I was disappointed in our defense in the first game. We've been really good on defense this year, but Frebis was able to work around that and have a good outing today. We got a big hit from Ellison with that two-run homer, and that got us a going in the first game. We're not going to hit a ton of home runs, but we need to get that big hit to get the offense going. And in the second game, Ford had that single to right field to get two more runs to make it 6-0 in our favor. Those plays make a big difference, and that's the way we have to play offensively."

On Ellison throwing out the runner at home plate...

"That was an inning they had something going. We felt like we were in control of the game, but if that guy scores it's 6-1, and they've got runners on second and third with one out. It was a great throw and Dane (McNabb) made a nice tag to keep control of the game. Jake has a nice arm in right field. Not everyone has seen it yet but he's got a Major League arm and that was a Major League play. He'll be able to throw with anyone in the league this year."

On Stephens play...

"Friday he had a bad at-bat during the game, and we talked about some adjustments that he made and got better today. We've known he's a very good defender, but he's starting to get better at the plate, too."

#### JUNIOR LHP ZAC CURTIS

On today's game...

"Today the fastball wasn't there, but I was able to use the cutter and change-up, especially deep in the count. Our defense was really good today, so I have to give them credit. It's great to rely on a defense like ours."

On differences between JuCo and Division I baseball...

"You can't get behind hitters. One through nine in the order are good hitters in Division I, and that's not always the case in JuCo. So you have to be your best the whole game. You can't miss spots, and you can't get behind hitters. I also have to learn to get ahead of hitters and rely on my defense. I had to strike more people out the last couple of years, but I've got a really good defense here and I have to learn to depend on it."

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