MT Prevails 10-8 over ETSU

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Junior Justin Sims, starting as the DH for the second time this season, ignited the Blue Raider offense with a 3-for-4 performance as Middle Tennessee held off visiting East Tennessee State 10-8 on Tuesday night. Senior Adam Larson ran his record to 2-1 on the year after picking up the victory in relief of starter Steven Kines. In two innings Larson did not allow a hit while striking out three. Senior Jeremy Armstrong earned his first save of the year with 2-1/3 innings of strong work. The Blue Raiders started hot, taking an early lead n the first inning. Chuck Akers was hit by a pitch and then stole second. He was driven in by a Sims single that gave the Knoxville native his first of four RBIs on the night. The Blue Raiders struck again in the third. Nate Jaggers reached first on an error by the shortstop and Sims did the honors again, this time with a two-run blast over the right field wall to give the Blue Raiders a 3-0 advantage. Doug Kunicki started the fourth inning with a double to left and then advanced to third and scored on two wild pitches. Troy Harp then hit a two-run home run driving in Jason Howarth who reached on an error by ETSU's left fielder Matt Traylor. Sims came through with his fourth on a single to right field that chased home Akers and gave MT a 7-0 advantage. The Bucs rallied for five runs in the top of the fifth behind four hits to close the gap to 5-7. In the bottom of the inning, however, the Blue Raiders were back on the offensive. Kunicki started the inning by reaching first on an error by the second baseman and advanced to third on Jason Howarth's double to left center. Harp loaded the bags when he was hit by a pitch. Akers then delivered an RBI after he took one for the team, forcing Kunicki. Howarth scored on a sac fly to right field by Jaggers, giving Middle Tennessee a 9-5 lead. Kunicki also got the sixth started with a single up the middle. A wild pitch moved him to second where Seth Yarbrough brought him home with a double to left. The Bucs would go on to hold the Blue Raiders scoreless for the rest of the contest, while plating one run in each of the final three frames. Armstrong finished the game with three strikeouts in the top of the ninth, but the Bucs sandwiched back-to-back hits between the second and third outs and had the tying run at the plate when the game ended. The Blue Raiders and Bucs are slated to conclude their series tomorrow afternoon with a 3 PM game. The game is also scheduled to be broadcast via the internet exclusively at GoBlueRaiders.com.

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