

March 4, 2005

McKenry's Homer the Difference in 6-5 Win

MT Media Relations

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - **Michael McKenry's** two-run homer in the bottom of the eighth was the difference in a 6-5 Middle Tennessee victory over Southeastern Louisiana Friday afternoon at Reese Smith Field in the first of a three-game series.

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The Blue Raiders erased a two-run deficit in their final two at-bats, with Todd Martin hitting a towering solo homer in the seventh before McKenry's third round-tripper of the season. Aaron Wallus got the final six outs to pick up his first win of the season, with Middle Tennessee winning its third straight game.

The Blue Raiders scored three runs in the first inning on five hits, and would have scored more had it not been for a doubleplay.

Eric McNamee and **Jeff Beachum** led off with singles before Martin singled home McNamee. **Marcus Taylor** then hammered a ball that first baseman Trent Hebert caught and doubled off Martin. But **Nate Jagers** followed with a single to score Beachum before a run-scoring double to right from **Adam Warren** for a 3-0 lead.

SLU got a run in the third when Jason Waguespack and Gary Duhe both singled. Waguespack scored when Kyle Ginn bounced into a doubleplay, cutting the lead to 3-1.

Middle Tennessee threatened to add to the lead in the fifth after a leadoff single from **Josh Archer** followed by a double from McNamee. But SLU starter Bernard Robert buckled down and got consecutive strikeouts before a walk to Taylor loaded the bases. Jagers then lined one to centerfield, but Tony Suarez ran it down just short of the wall for the third out.

The Lions took advantage in the sixth, getting to Blue Raider starter **Eric Blevins**.

A leadoff double from Ginn got things started, and after an out Randy Roth singled under the glove of Jagers at third. A single off the end of the bat from Hebert scored Ginn before Blevins struck out Ryan Spencer for the second out. But a hanging curveball to Suarez was deposited over the leftfield wall, giving SLU a 5-3 lead.

A towering solo home run from Martin, his second of the season, cut the deficit to one in the seventh, setting up McKenry's heroics.

Robert was still in the game in the eighth for SLU despite throwing more than 140 pitches, and Adam Darby singled to right with one out. McKenry's then hit an 0-1 pitch over the wall in dead centerfield, just his fourth hit of the season but third home run.

Wallus worked around a walk and an infield single in the eighth, with Roth thrown out at the plate trying to score from second on the single. The righthander gave up a two-out single in the ninth, but Taylor gunned down Duhe trying to stretch it into a double to end the game.

McNamee, Martin, Darby and McKenry all had two hits for the Blue Raiders. Duhe posted three hits in the loss for the Lions.

The two teams play again Saturday at 2 p.m. and conclude the series Sunday at 1 p.m. Middle Tennessee will send righthander **Matt Scott** to the mound, while the Lions will counter with lefthander Rodney Story.

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