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Vipers exercise fantastic finish

Monday, April 20, 2009

By BILL BRYANT

Times Sports Staff bill.bryant@htimes.com

Eakin's ninth TD pass on game's last play seals win

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The visiting Tennessee Valley Vipers used every bit of their 60 minutes Saturday night to beat the Arkansas Twisters. They scored twice in the last 24 seconds, including the game-winner with no time remaining, to escape with a 61-60 victory at Alltel Arena in Little Rock.

Quarterback Kevin Eakin's ninth touchdown pass of the game - a 9-yarder to newcomer Larry Shipp - set a franchise record.

"It was incredible," Eakin said. "It kind of reminded me of the af2 championship game (last August against Spokane). We would score and then

they would score. It went the way arena games should go."

Tennessee Valley (2-2) needed this one to just to get back to .500. The defending champs can head into back-to-back home games against Florida and South Georgia with a little bit of momentum.

"We needed this win badly, whether it was on the road or not," Eakin said. "Just for confidence purposes."

Eakin also needed an individual boost after tossing five interceptions in the first three games. He didn't throw one in 41 attempts against the Twisters (3-1), plus he adroitly directed the final drive, which covered 42 yards in 13 seconds.

"There definitely was no panic, because we practice those situations every week," Eakin said. "When they scored to go ahead, it was like everybody in the whole place thought it was over. We were saying 'Thank goodness they left us some time on the clock.' "

Michael Johnson paced the Tennessee Valley receivers with 11 catches for 117 yards and four touchdowns. Shipp added five receptions for 110 yards and three scores. **Chris Bocage had eight catches for 72 yards and a touchdown.**



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