Tracksters Set Four School Records at Kentucky

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - The Middle Tennessee track and field team set four school records Saturday at the Kentucky Invitational in Lexington, Ky., as well as picking up one automatic and two provisional qualifying times for the NCAA Championships.

The Blue Raider men had a stellar day all-around, but it was the Lady Raiders who did the most damage to the record books. Sophomores Rosemary Okafor and Jennifer Howard, and freshman Meaghan Byrd, all set school records on Saturday at Nutter Fieldhouse.

Okafor ran 53.66 in the 400m to win the event and best the school-record by almost two seconds previously set in 1996 by Nadia Graham. The mark is also an NCAA provisional qualifying time for Okafor and should get her into the NCAA Championships in March.

The Lady Raiders finished 1-4-5 in the 400m, with Nicolette Jarrett and Lanora Gray finishing just one-hundredth of a second apart in fourth and fifth, respectively.

Howard set a new school-record in the pole vault on Saturday, clearing 10-8.25 to better her own mark by 8.25. Howard jumped 10-feet last season as the first Lady Raider to compete in the event.

Byrd, who also competes in volleyball for Middle Tennessee, was the final Lady Raider to put her name in the record books on Saturday. Byrd had a mark of 38-7.5 in the 20-lb. weight throw. Byrd also finished seventh in the shot put with a mark of 40-3.25.

In the triple jump, Letitia Eady and Kim Freeman took third and fourth with marks of 39-5, while sophomore Jerkita McClorin finished sixth in the 60m hurdles in 8.76.

The big winner for the Blue Raiders on Saturday was Mardy Scales, who set a school record, won a pair of events and had an automatic NCAA qualifying time.

Scales won the 60m in a school-record 6.60, bettering his own time by .05 set last year at the NCAA Championships. His time was an NCAA automatic qualifying time in the event, assuring Scales of a chance at capturing his second straight All-America honor in the 60m.

Wesley Dupar-Scott took third in the 60m, with Omar Ali finishing seventh.

Scales came back to win the 200m in an NCAA provisional qualifying time of 21.21, as well, as the Blue Raiders took five of the top seven spots in the event. Victor Okorie finished second, followed by Dupar-Scott in third, DJ Spann in fifth and Ali in seventh.

Freshman Tim Hicks came in third in the 400m in 47.90, faster than the winning time at last year's Sun Belt Championships. Fred Williams finished seventh in the 400m, as former Blue Raider Godfrey Herring won the event in 47.00.

Senior Geoffrey Lagat took fourth in the 3000m in 8:31.17, while freshman Linnie Yarbrough won the 60m hurdles in 8.02. Brad Orr came in sixth in the hurdles, with Jasper Demps coming in ninth after hitting a hurdle during the finals.

Freshman Pierre Ingram came in fifth in the high jump, clearing 6-6. Blue Raider graduate assistant coach Andrew Owusu won the triple jump and finished second in the long jump.

The 4x400m relay teams for the Blue Raiders finished second and third, with times of 3:16.62 and 3:16.94, respectively. Dupar-Scott, Williams, Spann and Hicks ran on the second-place team, with Okorie, Orr, Yarbrough and Ali on the third-place squad. Freshman Sean Waller did not run in the relay due to illness.

"The guys ran really well as a team and we got a lot of good performances from young guys, and Mardy and Wesley really had terrific days," head track coach Dean Hayes said. "The relay teams ran well and we probably would have finished better if Linnie hadn't got cut off on his leg.

"The women also did well and it's always good to set school records. Everyone has been working very hard and it's good to get positive results in the first meet back from the break."

The track squads will be at home for the next two weekends, beginning with next Saturday's Blue Raider Invitational at the Murphy Center beginning at 11 a.m.

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