

November 15, 2008

Blue Raiders wrap up season at NCAA Regional Sangau top MT performer

Christian Lemon

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MARYVILLE, Tenn. - A cold and blustery day in the shadows of the Great Smokey Mountains was the setting for the Middle Tennessee cross country teams as they wrapped up their season at the NCAA Regionals held Lambert Acres Golf Club.

With the toughest competition to date, both teams ran inspired races on a day when most would have chosen to sit inside and stay warm.

"It was very windy and very cold for me. But I did my best," Middle Tennessee's star runner Zamzam Sangau said.

Because the Blue Raiders competed against the best schools from all over the southeast region including most of the top SEC schools this was one of the first races all season where Sangau was not favored to finish first overall. She did prove she belongs among the elite runners in southeast region finishing 16th overall out of almost 200 with a time of 21:33.69 in the women's 6K.

Depending on the outcome from this and other NCAA Regionals being held this weekend, Sangau may potentially get a bid to the NCAA Cross Country Championships held in Terre Haute, Ind., on November, 23. GoBlueRaiders.com will follow up on Sangau and her possible bid when the information is settled Sunday evening.

"All the women ran very well. We haven't run a 6K all season so it was a little more difficult for them," head coach Dean Hayes said.

Seniors Ashley Comstock and Ashleigh Thaler ran their final cross country meets for the Blue Raiders finishing 77th and 118th with times of 23:16.48 and 24:20.10 respectively.

Rising star Marla Bailey finished 74th with a time of 23:12.68. And freshman Kristen Tithof finished her first cross country season with a 121st finish and a time of 24:23.31.

The women's team finished 17th overall out of 23 teams.

Coming off the momentum of a top-10 finish at the Sun Belt Championship two weeks ago the men were once again led by Fetos Chemoai who finished 56th in 33:40.88 in the men's 10K. Isaac Biwott finished 80th with a 34:19.19 finish. David Emery and Julius Kirui did not finish.

"We do not run a lot of 10K's throughout the year, so this race was longer than they were used to. Most of our guys are more middle distance runners, which benefits us more in track. We don't recruit people who run the 10K," Hayes said.



Sophomore Zamzam Sangau proved she belongs among the elite runners in southeast region finishing 16th overall out of almost 200 with a time of 21:33.69 in the women's 6K.

(Athletic Communications)

The Middle Tennessee men's team did not qualify for the team competition because they were without the full five man roster required to compete. Junior standout William Songock did not compete due to an injury.

"Overall all of both teams did well. They accomplished their goals. The women did very well at the Sun Belt Championship and if not for William's injury the men would have done just as good," Hayes said.

With another season for the cross country teams in the books, the Middle Tennessee distance runners move to the indoor and outdoor track seasons.

"What I always try to tell my runners is that cross country helps us for track. Cross country is a just piece in the puzzle but the biggest thing for us is the two track championships. We don't want to burn them out of get them injured during cross country," Hayes said.

Men

56 Fetus Chemoai 33:40.88

80 Isaac Biwott 34:19.19

DNF David Emery

DNF Julius Kirui

Women

16 Zamzam Sangau 21:33.69

74 Marla Bailey 23:12.68

77 Ashley Comstock 23:16.48

118 Ashleigh Thaler 24:20.10

121 Kristen Tithof 24:23.31

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