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Track qualifiers to compete in regional meet

Team travels to Louisville for NCAA Mideast Regional

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Fourteen of Middle Tennessee's best track and field athletes will compete in Louisville, Ky., at the NCAA Mideast Regional Championships this weekend in order to attempt to qualify for the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships in Fayetteville, Ark., on June 10-13.

Eight athletes including Greg Franklin, Curtis King, Stanley Gbagbeke and Brandon Jones and the women's 4x400 meter relay team, all earned their qualifiers at the Sun Belt Conference Championships in Murfreesboro, Tenn., two weeks ago. Two other athletes improved their qualifying standards at the MT-hosted meet.

Sprinters Franklin and King both qualified for the 200 meters at the SBC Championships with respective times of 21.08 and 21.14. Franklin is currently ranked 17th in the Mideast Region in the event with King ranking 22nd. The pair will also compete with Gbagbeke and Samuel Adade in the 4x100 meter relay. The 4x100 relay qualified with a time of 39.95, which is the 30th fastest time in the NCAA this season.

Adade qualified for the 2007 NCAA Championships in Sacramento, Calif., with the 4x100 meter relay team, which finished eighth earning him All-American honors.

Freshman Roscoe Payne will compete in both the 110-meter high hurdles and 400-meter intermediate hurdles. His qualifying times of 51.41 in the 400 hurdles and 14.07 in the 110 hurdles at the SBC Championships rank him 41st and 50th in the nation, respectively.

Festus Chemaoui will round out the Blue Raider men on the track. He will participate in the 1500 meters after winning the event with a time of 3:44.62 at the War Eagle Invitational in Auburn, Ala.

Senior Carl Morgan may represent MT's best chance on the men's side to qualify for the NCAA Championships. The Cayman Islands native is currently ranked 14th on the NCAA descending order list in the triple jump with a winning mark of 52-4.5 (7.65m) earned at the SBC Championships. He is also listed at 30th nationally in the long jump with a leap of 25-1.25 (7.76m). Morgan will compete with teammate Jones, who also qualified in the triple jump at the SBC Championships with a 49-4.5 (15.06m) leap.

The Blue Raider women will be led by their strong junior trio of Sarah Nambawa, Brittany Cox and Zamzam Sangau.

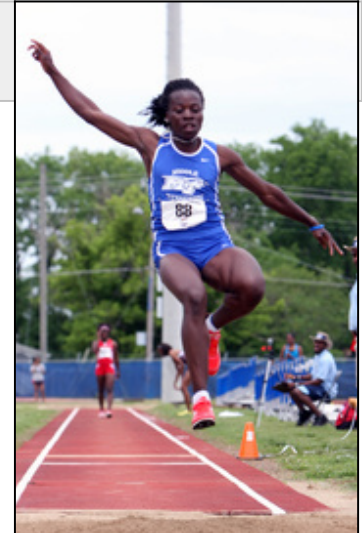
Nambawa, the only Blue Raider to qualify for the NCAA Outdoor Championships last season, will compete in both the triple and long jumps this weekend. Nambawa is currently ranked second in the country in the triple jump with a leap of 44-11.74 (13.71m) and 17th in the long jump with a distance of 20-10 (6.35m). Both marks were earned at the SBC Championships.

Teammate Kortney Thurman will enter in the long jump competition after recording a qualifying mark of 19-9.5 (6.03m) earlier this season at the Tiger Track Classic in Auburn, Ala. Nambawa will also run second with the 4x400 meter relay team of Sangau, TraMayne Gillyard and Kiara Henry. The quartet clocked a first place time of 3:40.73 at the SBC Championships.

Cox qualified for the discus and shot put with respective marks of 160-9 (49.01m) and 52-1.75 (15.89m). The Antioch, Tenn., native holds the Middle Tennessee shot put record and is ranked 24th in the nation this season. Sangau will also run the 1500 meters. Her 1500 qualifying time of 4:27.04 was counted at the War Eagle Invitational in Auburn, Ala.

The top five finishers in each event will earn a spot at the NCAA Outdoor Championships in two weeks.

Daily results and coverage will be available goblueraiders.com and uoflports.com.



Sarah Nambawa currently ranks second nationally in the triple jump heading into the NCAA Mideast Regional meet this weekend in Louisville, Ky. (Bradley Lambert)

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