Nambawa qualifies at MT Christmas Invitational

Blue Raiders take 16 first place finishes

December 12, 2009 · Christian Lemon

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessees' Sarah Nambawa and Stanley Gbagbeke highlighted the Blue Raiders' first action of the 2009-2010 season as both earned NCAA marks in their respective events at the MT Christmas Invitational. Overall, the teams combined for 16 first place finishes at the meet.

Nambawa garnered an NCAA automatic qualifier in the women's triple jump with a leap of 44-3 (13.48m) winning the event. The Uganda native posted an automatic qualifying mark at last season's MT Christmas Invitational with 43-10.25 (13.36m) mark.

Nambawa commented, "I always like to get a qualifying jump in at the first meet. This way I am in the NCAA Championships and can continue to improve my technique throughout the season."

She also won the long jump with a leap of 20-10.5 (6.36m) just missing an automatic qualifier by two centimeters. Sophomore Kortney Thurman placed second with a recorded distance of 19-5 (5.91m).

Also on the women's side, Cherice Robertson won the 55 meter hurdles in a time of 7.99 and the high jump in 5-6 (1.67m) in her first meet as a Blue Raider. Freshman teammate Ann Dudley finished second in the high jump with a mark of 5-2 (1.57m) in her first meet.

Seniors Brittany Cox and MeLyn Thompson competed in well in the throwing events as the duo took the top two spots in the shot put with Cox tossing 49-5.5 (15.07m) and Thompson hurling 42-10.5

(13.06m). Cox also won the weight throw with a mark of 57-4.5 (17.48m).

Zamzam Sangau won the 800 meters in 2:13.73 with freshman Alissa Ruggle finishing second in 2:30.02. Sangau also anchored the 4x400 meter relay team and brought the foursome back from three seconds behind before taking victory in the last 20 meters.

"Overall I was very pleased with the meet," said head coach Dean Hayes. "Sarah qualified in the triple jump and Cherice won both the hurdles and high jump. These are two events we did not even compete just year. Zamzam also had some good races."

For the men, Gbagbeke won the long jump with a mark of 25- 3 (7.7m). This is his first meet since competing in the 2009 IAAF World Championships in Berlin last summer.

In the sprints, Curtis King won the 55 and 200 meter dashes in 6.37 and 21.46, respectively. Robert Carter placed second in the 55 in 6.41.

In the distance events, David Emery won the mile run in 4:12.12 and finished runner-up to first place teammate Festus Chemaoi in the 800 meters in 1:56.08. Chemaoi crossed the line in 1:54.74. William Songock took first in the 3,000 meters in 8:44.12 with Chris Mason placing third in 8:57.23.

"This is a good reward for the both teams. I was pleased with most of the performances and hope the athletes will continue to workout over the Christmas holidays."

The teams return to competition on January 10 at the Tennessee State Invitational in Nashville, Tenn. Stay tuned to goblueraiders.com for coverage and updates.

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