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Women's track runner up at SBC Indoor

Men take fourth

Christian Lemon

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - It was a weekend of individual highs for the Middle Tennessee track and field teams as five athletes won single events at the Sun Belt Conference Indoor Track and Field Championships at Murphy Center. However, in the end the women's team finished second overall with the men's team placing fourth.

Thin Blue Raider rosters could not compete with the Western Kentucky depth in the men's and women's championships. As head coach Dean Hayes and Blue Raiders have had to battle through injury all throughout the season that would prove costly when it mattered the most. The Lady Toppers would defeat the Blue Raiders 179.33 to 110 while the Middle Tennessee men placed fourth with 87 team points behind Western Kentucky, North Texas and Louisiana.

Hayes commented, "It was just one of those screwy things where you have athletes win a lot of individual championships, but our lack of depth from injury hurt us in the end."

In Sunday's action, Senior Brittany Cox completed the sweep of the women's throwing events taking gold in today's weight throw competition. Yesterday, she stole victory in the shot put contest giving her the sweep. Her throw of 61-11 (18.78m) in the weight throw breaks a Sun Belt championships record in the event and earned the Antioch, Tenn., native Most Outstanding Field Athlete for the weekend.

"When I got hurt two weeks ago, I was nervous wondering if I was going to be able to compete to the level in which I did this weekend," said Cox. "I told myself I would just have to man up and take care of my business. I did and I am proud."

Cox will compete in two weeks at the NCAA Indoor Championships in Fayetteville, Ark., in the shot put and weight throw.

In the triple jump, Nyeisha Wright took third place, leaping 39-8.5 (12.10m) with teammate Cherice Robertson placing sixth with a jump of 38-6.25 (11.74m). Kortney Thurman placed eighth recording a mark of 38-4.75 (11.7m). Wright would go down to injury in the event and not compete in the 55 and 200 meter dash finals which she was qualified.

Robertson also placed second in today's 55 meter hurdles, running a spectacular time of 7.77, setting a personal best and earning an NCAA Provisional time. The 11 points she scored today combined with the 16 scored yesterday made the Memphis native the Top Meet Scorer for the championships.

In the distance events, Marla Bailey finished third in the 5,000 meters taking the bronze medal in a time of 17:52.10 with teammate Jackie Serem placing sixth in 18:09.48. Zamzam Sangau finished sixth in the mile run in 5:03.47. Sangau would not compete beyond the mile going down to injury in race. She was qualified in the finals of the 400 and 800 meters. Stephanie Smith placed ninth in the mile run with Alissa Ruggle coming in 12th winning the second heat of the event.

The men's mile run highlighted the team's track events on the second day of competition. Festus Chemaoui took the event, defending his 2008 and 2009 crown, clocking a time of 4:10.18. David Emery took the bronze medal in the race, finishing third in a time of 4:12.45. Isaac Biwott placed fifth in 4:14.89. Chemaoui would complete his trifecta later in the evening winning the 800 meters in 1:52.08, scoring 30 total points for the men's team and earning Men's Top Meet Scorer.

Hurdler DeRay Sloss placed third in the 55 meter hurdles. The senior competed in a lightning quick race winning the first finals heat in 7.46 to take third overall in the event. Roscoe Payne, the 2009 Sun Belt Indoor Champion 55 meter hurdles champion, would not repeat placing fourth.

The men's mile relay took six points placing third. Payne, running the second leg, brought the team back from almost ten meters behind evening the race with leader North Texas at the halfway point. Justin Chambers kept the team in the race, but a botched handoff between Chambers and Curtis King made victory unattainable. King sprinted hard and took the bronze for the team.



Festus Chemaoui won the 800 meters, mile run and 3,000 meters and the Sun Belt Indoor Track and Field Championships this weekend at the Murphy Center. He was honored as the Top Meet Scorer for his accomplishment. (Athletic Communications)

"We had athletes compete very hard for us. Festus and Brittany won five events between the two of them, and help us tremendously. Going into the outdoor season we will get some athletes back that can help us in the outdoor championships.

Stay tuned to GoBlueRaiders.com and follow as Middle Tennessee's best athletes will compete in the 2010 NCAA Indoor Championships in two weeks in Fayetteville, Ark.

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