Men's Cross Country Enters Season as Champion

Team to open competition at Friday's Belmont Opener

September 1, 2010 · Christian Lemon

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - For the first time in 26 years, the Middle Tennessee men's Cross Country team enters the season as defending conference champions. However, Dean Hayes' squad is not set to rest upon its laurels, returning three all-conference athletes, including 2009 SBC runner-up and NCAA Championships qualifier Festus Chemaoi.

"We have a competitive team returning and have picked up three runners that can help us," said Hayes. "Festus should challenge as the top runner in the conference in his senior year."

In 2009, Chemaoi took overall victory in three races en route to finishing second at the 2009 Sun Belt Championships. Eventually, he would become the first MT runner in 38 years to run at the NCAA Championships.

All-Sun Belt runners Chris Mason and Isaac Biwott will run behind Chemaoi as the second and third harriers on the roster. Mason placed seventh at the '09 conference championships in a gritty performance. He ran almost the entire race shoeless, upon losing both in the first half mile of the competition. Biwott, twice named to All-Sun Belt squads during his Blue Raider career, placed in ninth at the SBC

Championships.

"Isaac and Chris are further along this season than last season," said Hayes. "Chris has a year of experience under his belt after transferring from a junior college last season."

David Boiywo will run his first season with the cross country team. Boiywo came to Middle Tennessee last December and finished 13th in the 5,000 meters at the Sun Belt Indoor Championships before succumbing to a stress fracture halfway through the outdoor season. The Kenya native will challenge for the fourth or fifth position on the Middle Tennessee roster.

Newcomers Justin Cacaro and Keith Davis round out the 2010 roster. Cacaro, a UT-Martin transfer, was named to the 2009 All-OVC Team as a junior upon placing seventh at the 2009 Ohio Valley Championships in Nashville, Tenn. Davis joins the team as a freshman from Oakland High School in Murfreesboro.

"It will be tough to see where we stack up until we see what some of the other top schools have," said Hayes. "With three of last year's top 10 conference runner graduating, it will be tough determine who will be at the front of the pack."

The Middle Tennessee men will open competition at Friday's Belmont Opener at Percy Warner Park in Nashville, Tenn., beginning at 5 p.m. Stay tuned to GoBlueRaiders.com for all results and coverage.

Printed on May 22, 2013
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/47473