Cross country to run at Commodore Classic

Men enters meet with top 15 ranking

September 17, 2010 · Christian Lemon

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - The USTFCCCA ranked the Middle Tennessee men's cross country 14th in the South Region in a weekly poll. The squad will look to improve this ranking, Saturday as they are slated to compete at the 2010 Vanderbilt Commodore Classic at Percy Warner Park in Nashville, Tenn. The men's 8K race will begin at 9 a.m. to be immediately followed by the women's 5K race starting at 10 a.m.

The Blue Raiders entered the 2010 season unranked in the USTFCCCA polls, however, strong early performances including, two individual victories by Festus Chemaoi and a team first place finish at the Belmont Opening Meet, have pushed the team into the top 15. Middle Tennessee's highest ever ranking came in last season, when the team garnered the seventh spot in the polls, upon winning the 2009 Sun Belt Championships.

The MT women's team will look to crack the regional top 15 for the first time in 2010 by putting together a strong performance at the Commodore Classic. Freshman Deanna Brasz has emerged as the team's number one runner in the first two races of the year, while senior Marla Bailey continues to return to All-Sun Belt form. Newcomer Carolyne Tanui has shown to be the most improved athlete on the team, finishing third on the team at the Belmont Opener and second on the roster at the UTC PowerAde Invitational. Last season was the first time in program history the squad was listed in a USTFCCCA cross country poll.

Saturday's Commodore Classic will be a special test for both teams, as the top collegiate runners in the state are expected to be present. With Tennessee, Belmont, Chattanooga and host Vanderbilt will all sending their top athletes, the Blue Raiders will have the opportunity to see how the measure

against other schools in Tennessee.

In 2009, the MT men defeat state opponents except Tennessee. The Volunteers defeated the Blue Raiders at the Greater Louisville Classic taking third with Middle Tennessee placing fifth.

Full coverage and results of Saturday's meet can be found at GoBlueRaiders.com.

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