

Track shows well at first day of Sun Belt Indoor

Thurman, Dudley and David all take gold

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JONESBORO, Ark. - Middle Tennessee women's track and field team are in a tight battle with rival Western Kentucky and currently sit tied with 41 points after the first day of competition at the 2011 Sun Belt Indoor Championships in Jonesboro, Ark. The Blue Raider men, currently sit sixth with 22 points.

- **Day 1 Results**

Trailing the Blue Raiders and Hilltoppers, Arkansas State in third (25). Florida Atlantic (20), FIU (16), North Texas (15.5), ULM (12.5), Troy (12), South Alabama (8), and UALR and Louisiana-Lafayette tied at two points round out the women's team scores.

High jumpers Ann Dudley and Cherice Robertson got the Blue Raiders on the board early, going one, two in the event each leaping 5-7

(1.70m). Dudley won on jumps. This is Dudley's first individual Sun Belt crown. Robertson won the event at last year's SBC Indoor.

Kortney Thurman also earned the first conference title of her career, winning the the long jump. The Power Springs, Ga., native took gold off of a 20-3.75 (6.19m) jump. Teammate Kiara Henry, Nyeisha Wright and Rosina Amenebete placed fourth, fifth and eighth, respectively. Henry jumped 20-1 (6.12m), Wright 19-11.5 (6.08m) and Amenbete 19-6 (5.94m). In total, the Blue Raiders scored 20 points in the event.



Henry and Amenebede both ran well in the 55 meter dash, each earning spots in the final round. They ran respective 7.08 and 7.19. Henry also advanced in the 200 meters in a time of 24.77.

Amenbede, Robertson and Dudley all advanced through the preliminaries of the 55 meter hurdles. Amenbede's time of 7.98 was the fourth fastest of the first days heats. Robertson's time of 8.01 ranked seventh, while Dudley was 10th in 8.32.

Stephanie Smith qualified for Monday's 800 meter final. The sophomore's time of 2:17.64 in Sunday's preliminary heats was the ninth fastest in the heats.

Amber Jackson ran the third fastest preliminary time in the 400 meters. Jackson clocked 56.77 in the sixth heat and will run Monday.

On the men's side, host Arkansas State leads the with 43 points, followed by North Texas with 41. Louisiana-Lafayette, who had the lead toward the end of the evening, is in third with 38 points. Western Kentucky (32), FIU (25), Middle Tennessee (22), UALR (20), and South Alabama and ULM tied with 6 points each round out the rest of the scores.

Justus David took victory in the 3,000 meters, winning in a time of 8:26.68. Festus Chemaoui, last year's winner of the event, took fourth in 8:35.42. This gave the men 15 points.

Josh Butler scored four points in the high jump, placing fifth in the event with a 6-5.5 (1.97m).

MT added three points in the 4,000 meter distance medley. The team of David Boiywo, Robert Carter, Isaac Biwott and Justin Cacaro took sixth in 10:40.20.

In the 800 meter preliminaries, Chemaoui and David each won their respective heats and will move onto tomorrow's final round. Chemaoui clocked a 1:55.10 with David finishing in 1:57.47.

The sprinters did their jobs on the first day with seven total qualifying in the three short-races.

Noah Akwu led the corps with good finishes in the 200 and 400 meter dashes. The Egume, Nigeria native ran the fastest time in the 400 and second fastest in the 200 with respective times of 48.57 and 21.46. Ken Gipstrap and Kendall Bacchus' fourth and fifth best 200 times were 21.73 and 21.92. Gilstrap ran the quickest time in the 55 meter in 6.34. Bacchus finished eighth in the 55 in 6.48. Steven Palmer finished third in the 400 in a time of 48.88.

The Blue Raiders will continue competition at the 2011 Sun Belt Indoor Championships on Monday. Full results and post-meet coverage will be available on GoBlueRaiders.com.

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