Track to compete in Last Chance weekend

Athletes looking for the top NCAA marks

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee's top track and field athletes are set to compete in Ames, Iowa, Saturday, to compete at the 2011 NCAA Last Chance Weekend. Junior Justus David will compete at Notre Dame's Last Chance meet.

This weekend's meet will be the final opportunity of the 2011 indoor season for MT's best athletes to garner qualification for the NCAA Indoor Championships.

"We take our best athletes who are the on the cusp of the needed NCAA top 15 mark to these meets," head coach Dean Hayes said. "Its the 'Last chance' to qualify for the NCAAs."

On the women's team, Ann Dudley will compete in the high jump. Entering the weekend, Dudley has a standing mark of 5-11.25 (1.81m), ranking her 17th on the NCAA descending order list. She would need at least a mark of 5-11.5 (1.82m) to qualify for the NCAA championships.

Fellow jumper, Kortney Thurman will also travel to Ames, looking to solidify to her qualification chances. Thurman's standing season best long jump mark of 20-5.25 (6.23m) earned at the MT Valentine Invitational last month ranks 21st nationally. She will need to jump at least 20-7-5 (6.28m) to earn a top 15 place.

Cherice Robertson will run the 60 meter hurdles. Robertson's best 55 meter hurdle time of 7.92 was run at last weekend's Sun Belt Indoor Championships.

France Makabu may participate in the triple jump. She has a standing mark of 41-5.25 (12.63m), recorded a month ago at the MT Valentine meet.

For the men, Ken Gilstrap will run the 60-meter dash. The freshman ran an exciting race at last weekend's Sun Belt Indoor, tying ULM's Luther Ambrose in a time of 6.36 for a share of the SBC crown. His season best converted 55 meter time of 6.78 is the 69th fastest in the collegiate ranks. Gilstrap must run at least 6.55 to qualify for the NCAA meet.

Steven Palmer is expected to compete in the 400 meters. Palmer's top time in 2011 is 47.95.

Josh Butler, the 2011 Sun Belt Indoor triple jump champion, will be the only Blue Raider men's field athlete to compete on last chance weekend. Butler sits 32nd in the NCAA with a standing mark of 51-2.25 (15.60m). He must leap at least 52-5 (15.98m) to garner NCAA qualification.

Justus David will travel to South Bend, Ind., for the Notre Dame Last Chance Meet to run the 5,000 meters. The Notre Dame's distance competition is expected to be stronger than the Iowa State meet and will give the Kitui, Kenya native a better opportunity to qualify. His season best time of 14:40.80 was run last weekend at the SBC Championships.

Noah Akwu is the only the Blue Raider athlete who is currently qualified for the NCAA Indoor Championships. Akwu ran a converted 21.60 in the 200-meter dash to take victory at the Sun Belt Indoor Championships. It was the second fastest in the collegiate ranks this season and guaranteeing

Post-meet coverage of all Blue Raider athletes at the 2011 NCAA Last Chance Weekend will be available at GoBlueRaiders.com.

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