

Long Jumpers lead Raiders on Day 2

Women sit second at Sun Belt Outdoor Championships

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee's women's long jumpers took five of the top six spots in the event to help slot the team second overall on Saturday at the 2011 Sun Belt Conference Outdoor Championships at Dean A. Hayes Track and Soccer Stadium.



In the overall standings Middle Tennessee currently sits

second after two days with 52 points, one behind leader Arkansas State (53). Western Kentucky is third with 48 points, while South Alabama comes in fourth with 41 points.

Kiara Henry led the Blue Raiders, taking the 2011 women's long jump crown with a career-best mark of 20-8.5 (6.31m). Henry's winning jump came on her third attempt of the event and ranks as the 19th longest in the NCAA this season. Nyeisha Wright placed third with a season-high mark of 20-3.5 (6.18m). Cherice Robertson, Rosina Amenebede and Kortney Thurman placed fourth through sixth with respective distances of 19-4.75 (5.91m), 19-0 (5.80m) and 19-0 (5.8m).

In total, the MT long jumpers recorded 28 valuable team points. Last season, the squad scored an impressive 34 points, stealing six of the top seven spots. Middle Tennessee has won the Sun Belt Outdoor Long Jump Crown the past three years.

The Blue Raider jumping corps followed up their performance with a one, two showing the in the high jump. Ann Dudley was crowned Sun Belt Conference champion for the second consecutive time this year, jumping 5-8 (1.73m) in victory. Robertson was runner-up to Dudley with a 5-6 (1.7m) jump.

In the preliminary running heats, Dudley was a finals qualifier for Sunday's 100-meter hurdles. The in a time of 14.63. Amenebede took third in the in the second heat with a 13.82 time. She will run in the finals race.

Kiara Henry will run in the Sunday's 100-meter dash final. Henry took third in the second heat in a time of 11.98 and advanced as the ninth qualifier.

Freshman Rachel Islam placed third in the third heat of the 400-meter hurdles. Her time of 1:05.37 to advance to Sunday's finals.

In the men's preliminaries, hurdler Roscoe Payne will run both the 110- and 400-meter hurdles. Payne ran respective times of 14.68 of 55.38 to earn bids in Sunday's finals.

Quarter-milers Noah Akwu and Steven Palmer ran qualifying times of 47.93 of 48.09, respectively. Akwu, 2011 Indoor All-American, won the prelims in his first open 400 meters of the outdoor season.

Akwu also won the prelims of the 200-meter dash in 21.24. Kendall Bacchus earned the eighth qualifier in 21.78.

In the 100-meter dash, Bacchus placed third in 10.63 in the first heat, while Ken Gilstrap took fourth in 10.71. Both will run in Sunday's final round.

Festus Chemaoui will have a chance to defend his crown in the 800 meters on Sunday. The two-time champion qualified in the second heat in a time of 1:54.09.

Isaac Biwott finished the evening for the Blue Raiders taking bronze in the 3,000-meter steeplechase final in 9:20.98. Biwott took third in the event in 2010.

Biwott's six team points give the Blue Raiders 11 total on the competition.

The Blue Raiders are expected to improve their standings on Sunday with the high and triple jumps as well as the finals of the running events.

Middle Tennessee will conclude competition at the 2011 Sun Belt Outdoor Championships Sunday. Post-meet coverage will be available at GoBlueRaiders.com.

WOMEN'S TEAM STANDINGS - DAY 2

Arkansas State - 53

Middle Tennessee - 52

Western Kentucky - 48

South Alabama - 41

Florida Atlantic - 23

Troy - 21.5

FIU - 19

North Texas - 16.5

ULM - 16

UALR - 11.5

Louisiana-Lafayette - 10.5

MEN'S TEAM STANDINGS - DAY 2

ULM - 51

Louisiana-Lafayette - 40

Arkansas State - 36

South Alabama - 25

Western Kentucky - 24

North Texas - 19

Troy - 18

Middle Tennessee - 11

UALR - 7

FIU - 3

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