Thurman set to jump at NCAA Championships

Senior looking to end career as All-American

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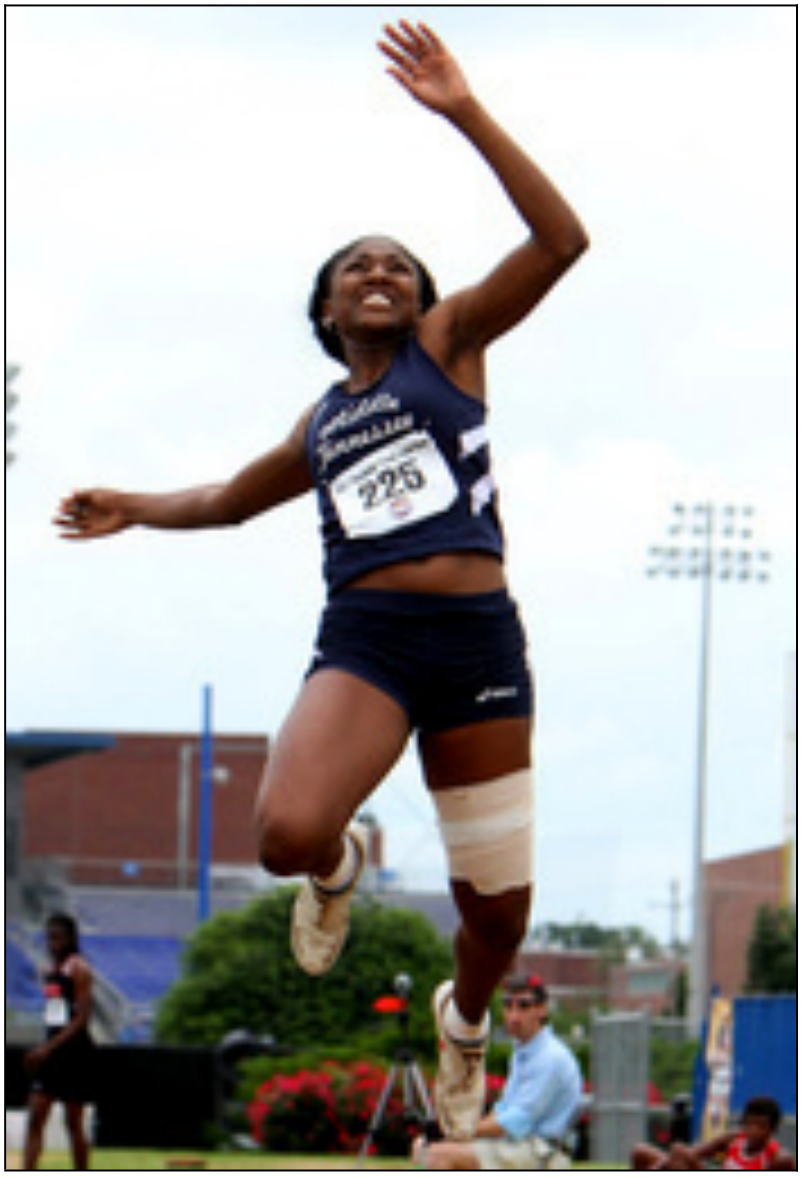

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee's Kortney Thurman will look to become the program's first NCAA All-American in the long jump in 13 years on Wednesday as she is set to compete at the 2011 NCAA Outdoor Championships in Des Moines, Iowa.

Thurman, a Blue Raider senior, is the lone MT track athlete to qualify for the 2011 NCAA Outdoor Championship as she placed eighth in the long jump last weekend at the East Regional in Bloomington, Ind. The Power Springs, Ga., native leapt 20-3.75 (6.18m) to garner a spot in Wednesday's finals in Des Moines.

Should Thurman place eighth or better at the championships, she would become the first Middle Tennessee female to earn NCAA All-American honors in the long jump since 1994, when both Dionne Rose and Jacqui Brown earned the accolades.

Last season, triple jump Sarah Nambawa and shot putter Brittany Cox both earned All-American titles in their respective disciplines. Nyeisha Wright jumped in the long jump, taking 17th.

Head coach Dean Hayes commented, "We have had athletes qualify for the long jump, but they either did not quite have the jumps to get All-American or we wanted to focus them in other events. It would be nice to see some take the title in the long jump again."

This season, Thurman posted a career-best of 20-11.25 (6.38m) on April 9 at the TSU Boston-Moon

Classic in Nashville, Tenn. It stood as the third-longest in the collegiate ranks at the time.

With the top athletes in the nation present, Thurman will need a jump similar to her mark at TSU.

"That jump was not a that out of the ordinary for me," said Thurman. "Usually I jump around 20-11, but sometimes I take away inches because I do not keep my feet together. If I focus on my technique, I feel confident I have the ability to place in the top-eight to earn All-American."

This will be Thurman's first appearance at an NCAA Championships.

"Its exciting for Kortney," Hayes said. "She has worked hard her last four years and she deserves this. This season, she has been competing hard and is confident she can perform well in any field she is entered."

Thurman said, "It is exciting and can be a little overwhelming. I just want to go out there and compete. Its about focusing three jumps."

Post-meet coverage of Thurman at the 2011 NCAA Outdoor Championships will be available on GoBlueRaiders.com.

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