Cross Country competes at Belmont Opener

Men place sixth, Women DNQ

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- The Middle Tennessee men's cross country team finished sixth while the women did not qualify a score on Friday evening at the Belmont Opener in Nashville.

Kentucky took home the men's 5k team title with 62 points, bettering second-place and host Belmont by 18 points. Meanwhile Vanderbilt won the women's 4k by finishing with just 18 points, a staggering 45 points better than Lipscomb.

The Blue Raider men were dealt a tough blow earlier in the day Friday when it was learned that senior Justus David would not be able to compete due to injury. Despite the setback, the squad received strong performances from several runners, led by freshman Robinson Simatei. The Iten, Kenya, native placed third with a time of 15 minutes, 34.46 seconds.

"Overall, I thought it was an all right performance for an opening meet," said cross country coach Dean Hayes. "Robinson ran a very sound race, and he will be tough to deal with as the season continues."

Fellow freshman and Kenya native Silas Taiget was the second Middle Tennessee runner to cross the finish line, grabbing an 18th-place finish while clocking a 16:02.12.

Like the men, the Blue Raider women's squad was led by a newcomer. Sophomore transfer Lucy

Kapkiai finished eighth, logging a 14:25.86.

“Lucy ran very well today,” Hayes said. “She does not have very much experience, so I was extremely pleased with her performance.”

Sophomore Deanna Brasz came into the race as the team’s top returnee from last season, and she did not disappoint. The Vineland Station, Ontario, product completed the course in 15:12.67, finishing 24th.

The Middle Tennessee men and women will return to action next Friday when they head to Chattanooga for the UTC PowerAde Invitational.

Follow the Blue Raider men’s and women’s cross country teams on Twitter @MTTrackField and on Facebook at the MT Track & Field page. Also, stay up-to-date on the teams on their new blog, which can be found linked on the Track & Field page on GoBlueRaiders.com.

Men's Team Results Finish, Team, Points 1, Kentucky, 62 2, Belmont, 78 3, Tennessee, 84 4, Lipscomb, 93 5, Vanderbilt, 171 6, Middle Tennessee, 180 7, Belmont Alumni, 183 8, Nashville Harriers, 195 9, Kennesaw State, 198 10, Austin Peay, 252 11, UT-Martin, 304 **Men's Individual Results** Finish, Name, Time (Winner and MT Finishers) 1, Luis Orta, Kentucky, 15:22.40 3, Robinson Simatei, 15:34.46 18, Silas Taiget, 16:02.12 45, Lyle Haywood, 16:37.93 54, Chris Mason, 16:53.65 92, Jamarious Jones, 18:47.09 **Women's Team Results** Finish, Team, Points 1, Vanderbilt, 18 2, Lipscomb, 63 3, Kentucky, 76 4, Belmont, 99
5, Tennessee, 129 6, Kennesaw State, 192 7, Austin Peay, 195 **Women's Individual Results** Finish, Name, Time (Winner and MT Finishers) 1, Jordan White, Vanderbilt, 14:05.45 8, Lucy Kapkiai, 14:25.86 24, Deanna Brasz, 15:12.67 45, Autumn Gipson, 15:45.86 56, Rachel Islam, 16:30.67

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