Cross Country set for Sun Belt Championships

Women run at 10 a.m.; Men begin at 11 a.m.

October 28, 2011 · Athletic Communications

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -- The Middle Tennessee men's and women's cross country teams will head to Bowling Green, Ky., this weekend for the Sun Belt Conference Championships which take place on Saturday at 10 a.m. CDT.

The women will begin the day at Kereiakes Park with a 5k race at 10 a.m. The men will follow with an 8k run scheduled to begin at 11 a.m.

The Blue Raider men were predicted to finish third by the league's coaches while the women were forecasted to place fifth. Western Kentucky was picked to win both races.

Middle Tennessee finished second in the men's championship last season after taking home the conference title in 2009. Meanwhile the women followed up back-to-back runner-up finishes in 2008 and 2009 with a fourth-place finish last year.

"This is the meet that everyone looks forward to," said cross country head coach Dean Hayes. "Both of our teams have a chance, so that is all you can ask for."

Justus David will guide the men's squad on Saturday following his individual title two weeks ago at the Front Runner Invitational. He will be looking to become the first Middle Tennessee male to claim the Sun Belt individual championship since Geoffrey Lagat captured the second of his back-to-back championships in 2001.

"Justus has been tremendous all season," Hayes said. "I expect him to perform well on Saturday and compete for the individual championship."

Freshmen Robinson Simatei and Silas Taiget will look continue their strong campaigns this weekend. Simatei is second on the team to David with three top-five finishes thus far this season. Taiget has notched two top-10 finishes while finishing in the top 20 a total of four times in 2011.

"The men have run very well this year," said Hayes. "We are very young, though, so I look forward to seeing how we perform."

Lucy Kapkiai will look to land the Middle Tennessee women its first Sun Belt individual championship. The freshman has put together a historic season so far highlighted by three individual titles including a win at the Front Runner Invitational on Oct. 15.

“Lucy has shown she has the talent,” Hayes said. “However, she is a freshman and this is her first conference championship meet, so you never know what to expect.”

The women hope to receive another solid performance from sophomore Autumn Gipson this weekend. The Oak Ridge, Tenn., native is fresh off a third-place finish at the Front Runner Invitational in Chattanooga.

“Autumn has run well all season,” said Hayes. “We need to have another strong effort from her and the rest of the women in order to compete for the team title.”

Fellow sophomore Deanna Brasz will aim to build off her strong fifth-place finish two weeks ago. She led the Blue Raider women with a ninth-place finish at last season’s Sun Belt Championships.

Complete Sun Belt Conference Championship information can be found here.

Results of the meet will be posted on the teams’ Facebook and Twitter pages as soon as they become available. A full recap and results will be available on GoBlueRaiders.com on Saturday evening.

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 the new Track & Field Notebook, which can be found here as well as linked on the Track & Field page on GoBlueRaiders.com.

Printed on December 9, 2013
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/56139