

Cross Country heads to NCAA Regionals

Five Blue Raiders to run on Saturday

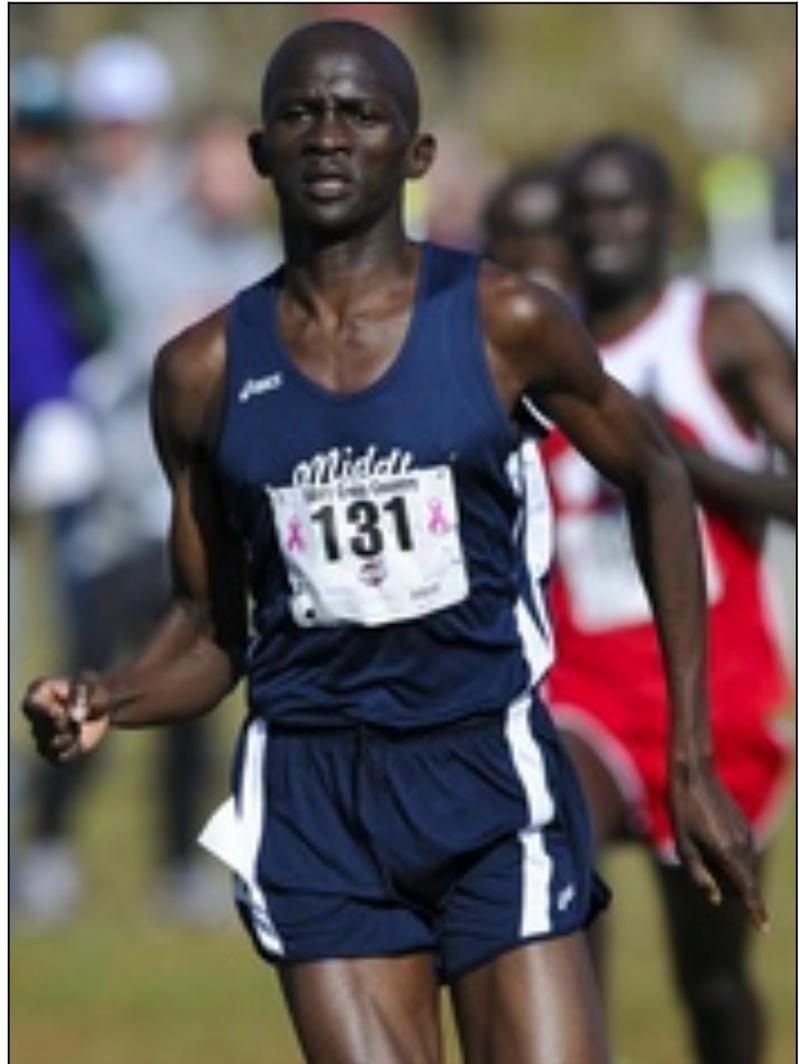
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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. --

The Middle Tennessee men's and women's cross country teams will send five runners to the NCAA South Regionals on Saturday morning in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

Justus David, Keith Davis and Robinson Simatei will represent the Blue Raider men while Autumn Gipson and Lucy Kapkiai will take part in the women's race. The men will begin the day at the Harry Pritchett Running Course with a 10k at 10 a.m. CST while the women will run a 6k race scheduled to begin at 11:15 a.m. Complete NCAA South Regional information can be found [here](#).

"This meet determines who gets to run at the NCAA Championships," said cross country head coach Dean Hayes. "I expect us to compete well and am hoping for good results on Saturday."



The South Regional Championship is one of nine regional meets this weekend. The top two teams from each race will automatically qualify for the NCAA Championships on Nov. 21 in Terre Haute, Ind. A selection committee will then pick an additional 13 at-large teams from across the country.

Once the teams have been selected for the NCAA Championships, the top four individual finishers from each regional race who are not part of a qualifying team will automatically qualify for the Championships. The selection committee will then select an additional two runners from across the country to complete the fields.

Middle Tennessee will be looking to qualify its first runners for the NCAA Championships since Festus Chemaoui and Zamzam Sangau each reached the national meet in 2009. Chemaoui placed

13th at the NCAA South Regional that season while Sangau came in fifth in the women's competition.

David will aim to continue his remarkable season on Saturday and continue his cross country career by advancing through the regional meet. He has claimed three individual meet titles in 2011 to go along with second- and third-place finishes. The senior is coming off winning the Sun Belt men's individual title on Oct. 29.

"Justus has had a phenomenal season," Hayes said. "I believe he has a very good chance of advancing to the NCAA Championships."

Simatei has been one of the Blue Raiders' top two finishers in each race this season. He has collected four top-10 finishes including a sixth-place finish at the Sun Belt Championships. Meanwhile Davis has saved his best performances for last, placing 11th at the Front Runner Invitational on Oct. 15 while finishing 18th at the conference championships.

Kapkiyai has led the Blue Raider women all season, picking up three individual meet titles and accumulating a total of five top-10 finishes. The Eldoret, Kenya, native finished second at the Sun Belt Championships with a 5k time of 17 minutes, 45.70 seconds.

"Lucy has a good chance of advancing through the regionals, but her lack of experience hurts her," said Hayes. "No matter what happens, this meet will benefit her for the future."

Like Davis, Gipson has come on strong at the end of the 2011 season. She finished third at the Front Runner Invitational in Chattanooga, Tenn., and followed up the performance by placing 21st two weeks ago in Bowling Green, Ky.

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.

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