Track & Field returns to Kentucky for Rod McCravy Memorial

Blue Raiders look to maintain momentum

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -- The Middle Tennessee track and field teams will make their second January visit to the Bluegrass State when they trek to Lexington, Ky., this weekend for the Rod McCravy Memorial.

The meet will begin Friday at 5 p.m. CT with the men's and women's weight throws, women's pole vault, men's high jump and the men's and women's long jump. The competition will resume Saturday at 9:30 a.m. with the women's high jump and the men's and women's triple jump. The men's 1600-meter relay will close out the day at approximately 4 p.m. A complete schedule of events can be found here

Middle Tennessee will be facing its toughest competition so far this season as four competing teams are included in this week's USTFCCCA Top 25. The No. 21 Ole Miss men as well as the women's squads from Central Florida, Ohio State and Southern Illinois will all take part in this weekend's event. Other participating schools include

Cincinnati, Georgia Tech, South Carolina, Western Kentucky and Vanderbilt.

“This meet features a very large field of teams and offers some great competition,” said Middle Tennessee head coach Dean Hayes. “Our goal this weekend is to continue to improve as we come up on the last few meets of the season.”

The Blue Raiders enter the meet following another successful weekend. The men’s squad claimed five event titles while the women took home three at last Saturday’s Blue Raider Invitational. Through four competitions, each team has racked up 11 event wins each to go along with numerous top-five finishes.

Sprinters Kenneth Gilstrap and Kiara Henry were recognized this week as they were named Sun Belt Male and Female Track Athletes of the Week. Gilstrap posted a time of 6.35 seconds in the 55 meters last weekend which is the nation's eighth best time in the event this season. Henry meanwhile won the women's 200 meters and was the top collegiate finisher in the 55 meters.

Jumper Cordairo Hayes captured his second-consecutive Male Field Athlete of the Week honor after another successful weekend. The Memphis, Tenn., product set personal bests in both the high jump and long jump competitions, helping him gather three top-five finishes.

Justus David led Middle Tennessee at last season’s Rod McCravy Memorial. The senior won the men’s 3000 meters, collecting the squad’s only event title of the day and one of five top-five finishes for the teams. The Blue Raiders also posted a number of personal bests at the meet as Deanna Brasz, Kiara Henry, Amber Jackson and France Makabu all registered top times on the women’s side. Men’s sprinters Noah Akwu and Steven Palmer also left Lexington with new personal-bests.

Live statistics of the meet can be followed here. Results of each day’s events will be posted on the teams’ Facebook and Twitter pages as soon as they become available with a full recap and results available on GoBlueRaiders.com at the end of each day.

Follow the Blue Raider track and field 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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