Blue Raiders to host MTSU Invitational

MT hosts first of two-consecutive home meets

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -- The Middle Tennessee track and field teams return to Murfreesboro this weekend for the first of two-consecutive home meets as they host the MTSU Invitational presented by MarineOfficer.com on Saturday at the Murphy Center.

The men's and women's shot put will kick off the day's events at 11 a.m. CT followed shortly by the long jump and pole vault competitions. The action will conclude with the one mile relays just before 5 p.m. The complete meet schedule can be found here.

The men's and women's squads from Eastern Kentucky, South Alabama and UALR as well as the Troy women will join the Blue Raiders to comprise the meet. Saturday will mark the first time Middle Tennessee has competed against both South Alabama and UALR this season. Troy visited Murfreesboro for the Blue Raider Invitational two weeks ago while Eastern Kentucky was a part of both the Kentucky Invitational and Rod McCravy Memorial.

"This is another meet in which we will focus on trying to get better individually and as a team," said Middle Tennessee head coach Dean Hayes. "We plan on having some people run in some events that they have not competed in this year to see what we can do in different areas. We also need to get healthy as a team, so hopefully it will be a productive day."

Freshman Lucy Kapkiai highlighted Middle Tennessee's performance at last weekend's Rod McCravy Memorial. The Eldoret, Kenya, native set a new school record in the 3,000 meters, clocking a time of 9 minutes, 49.37 seconds, eclipsing the previous record held by Zamzam Sangau by more than five seconds.

Fellow women's distance runners Autumn Gipson, Rachel Islam and Amber Jackson also had productive meets in Lexington. Islam and Jackson both recorded personal-best times in the 800 meters while Gipson set a personal best in the mile run.

The Blue Raider men posted solid results in the 400 meters last Saturday. Steven Palmer led the squad, logging a time of 48.99 seconds to place eleventh in the competition. Meanwhile freshmen Geoffrey Akena, Asa Bowman, Rycine Ellison and Demetrius Shelton and sophomore James Messick all notched personal-best times in the event.

Kiara Henry propelled the Blue Raiders to a very successful day at last year's MTSU Invitational, winning the women's collegiate 55-meter and 400-meter dashes. The Blue Raider women also swept the jumps events as Ann Dudley, France Makabu and former Blue Raider Nyeisha Wright each captured event titles. On the men's side, Kenneth Gilstrap and Steven Palmer posted one-two finishes in the 200 meters while Justus David ran a personal best time of 1:52.38 to claim victory in the 800 meters.

Live statistics of Saturday's meet can be followed here. Results of the 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 on Saturday night.

Please check back to GoBlueRaiders.com on Monday to view the meet photo gallery. Additional pictures will be available on the teams' Facebook page.

Middle Tennessee track and field is proud to welcome MarineOfficer.com as a new sponsor of the program. Fans are encouraged to visit MarineOfficer.com for excellent information on a possible career as a Marine Officer.

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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