Track & Field closes regular season with Valentine Invitational

Final meet prior to SBC Championships

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -- The Blue Raider track and field teams will wrap up their indoor regular seasons when they host the Valentine Invitational presented by MarineOfficer.com on Saturday at 3 p.m. CT.

Saturday's competition will be part of an exciting day on campus. The meet will follow Middle Tennessee's men's basketball game against UALR which is slated for a noon tip-off on ESPN2. The game has been designated a "Blue Out" as Middle Tennessee is asking fans to wear blue. Fans are encouraged to attend both the basketball game and the track meet in support of Blue Raider athletics.

A variety of field events including the men's and women's shot put and long jump will open the meet at 3 p.m. The men's and women's one mile relay will conclude the competition at approximately 8:10 p.m. The complete meet schedule can be viewed here.

The Blue Raiders will be joined in the field by the

men's and women's teams
from UALR, Arkansas-Pine Bluff, Chattanooga, Milligan, Tennessee State and Western Kentucky as well as the Belmont men's team. Arkansas-Pine Bluff is the only school that has yet to visit Murfreesboro for a meet so far this season.

"This is an important meet as it is our last performance prior to the Sun Belt Championships," said Middle Tennessee head coach Dean Hayes. "We need to perform well and make sure we are sharp as we prepare for the conference meet."

Middle Tennessee enters the meet following another successful home showing at last weekend's MTSU Invitational. The men and women each captured three event titles and two top collegiate finishes. In addition, a total of 24 Blue Raiders posted personal-best times/marks last Saturday.

Noah Akwu led the squads at last season's Valentine Invitational. He captured event titles in both the 55 meters and 200 meters with respective times of 6.41 and 21.36 seconds. Fellow sprinter Steven Palmer won the 400 meters with a personal-best time of 47.95. Senior Rosina Amenebede and former Blue Raider Kortney Thurman propelled the women's team. Thurman posted a mark of 20 feet, 5.25 inches (6.23 meters) to win the long jump while Amenebede was victorious in the 55-meter hurdles, clocking a 7.99 after recording a time of 7.85 in the preliminaries.

The Blue Raiders continue to be led by Cordairo Golden in the men's jumps events. The Memphis, Tenn., product won the long jump and was the top collegiate finisher in both the high jump and triple jump events last weekend. He has posted personal-bests in all three jumps events this season including his long jump leap of 23-6.25 (7.17m) which came this past Saturday.

Meanwhile Ann Dudley is putting together a dominant season in the high jump competition. She has either won or finished as the top collegiate in the event in five of the team's six meets this year. The junior was recognized this week as the Sun Belt Female Field Athlete of the Week following her performance at last weekend's MTSU Invitational.

Akwu made an impressive return to the track last weekend after being forced to miss the beginning of the year due to injury. The 2011 All-American in the 200 meters finished second in the 200 meters and posted a personal-best time of 6.39 seconds to place third in the 55 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 late Saturday night.

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

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.