

# Track & Field hosts Sun Belt Championships

## Blue Raider men look to defend title

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### **MURFREESBORO, Tenn. --**

The Sun Belt Track & Field community descends upon Murfreesboro this weekend, as Middle Tennessee will play host to the 2012 Sun Belt Indoor Track & Field Championships at the Murphy Center.

The two-day meet will begin Saturday at 8 a.m. CT with various pentathlon events and will continue all day with the distance medley relay wrapping up the day at 9:15 p.m. Sunday's action will kick off at 8 a.m. with heptathlon competitions and is scheduled to conclude with the 4x400-meter relay at 5:50 p.m. The full schedule of events along with other meet information can be viewed at the Sun Belt Championship Central page [here](#).



The Sun Belt coaches picked Western Kentucky to place first on the men's side while FIU was tabbed as the favorite to win the women's title. The Middle Tennessee men's and women's squads were both selected to finish second.

"This is the meet that we have been preparing for all season," said Middle Tennessee head coach Dean Hayes. "Like every year, the competition is going to be tough, so we are going to have to perform to the best of our abilities. I am looking forward to a great meet."

The Middle Tennessee men will be looking to defend its 2011 title in which the Blue Raiders racked up 126 points en route to the first-place finish. Justus David led the team at last season's Championships, winning the 3,000 meters and mile run on his way to being named 2011 Sun Belt Indoor Track Athlete of the Year. Meanwhile the women hope to capture their first indoor championship since claiming four straight from 2001-04. They finished fourth at last year's

competition.

Sophomore Cordairo Golden has guided the Middle Tennessee men's team all season in the jumps events. The Memphis, Tenn., product has claimed three event titles and a total of 14 top-five finishes. Three times this season he has been honored as the Sun Belt Field Athlete of the Week.

Steven Palmer and Roscoe Payne have propelled the men in the track events. Palmer has won a pair of event titles in both the 200 and 400-meter competitions to go along with two other top-five finishes in the 200 meters. Meanwhile Payne has dominated the men's 55-meter hurdle event, picking up three titles. The highlight of his season came at the Blue Raider Invitational in which he ran a personal-best time of 7.39 seconds in the preliminaries of the competition. The time is currently tied for the fourth in the country this season.

The women's team has been fueled all season in the jumps by junior Ann Dudley. She has notched five titles in the event including setting a personal-best and school record with a leap of 6 feet, 0.00 inches (1.83 meters) at the MT Christmas Invitational on Dec. 10.

Freshmen Sheniece Daphness and Christal Wilson have provided solid performances in the track events. Daphness has four top-five finishes in the 55 meters highlighted by clocking a personal-best time of 7.10 at the MTSU Invitational. Wilson has finished in the top five of all five of her starts in the 55-meter hurdles this season. Her best 2012 result came when she won the 55-meter hurdles at the Valentine Invitational, logging a personal-best time of 8.11 seconds.

Sophomore Amber Jackson and freshman Lucy Kapkiai have piloted the Blue Raider women in the distance events. Jackson set a personal-best in the 800 meters with a time of 2 minutes, 11.63 seconds at the Rod McCravy Memorial, good enough for a sixth-place finish. The Chicago, Ill., native also won the event at the Valentine Invitational. Kapkiai has also found success in the 800 meters, capturing two top-five finishes. Her best performance came at the Rod McCravy Memorial as well, where she posted a personal-best and school record time of 9:47.39 in the 3,000 meters.

Live statistics of the Sun Belt Championships 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 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.

## **2012 Sun Belt Conference Indoor Track & Field Predicted Order of Finish**

### **Men**

1. Western Kentucky

**2. Middle Tennessee**

3. Arkansas State

4. UL-Lafayette

5. North Texas
6. South Alabama
7. UALR
8. ULM
9. FIU

**Women**

1. FIU

**2. Middle Tennessee**

3. North Texas
4. Arkansas State
4. Western Kentucky
6. South Alabama
7. Florida Atlantic
8. UL-Lafayette
9. Troy
10. ULM
11. UALR

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