Champions! Blue Raider women win Sun Belt Championship

First indoor team title since 2004

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -- The Middle Tennessee women's track and field team won the Sun Belt Indoor Track & Field Championship in a thrilling final day of competition on Sunday at the Murphy Center.

The Blue Raiders entered the final event of the meet – the 4x400-meter relay – trailing North Texas 102-100 in the team standings. The Middle Tennessee "A" squad comprised of Kiara Henry, Amber Jackson, France Makabu and Christal Wilson completed the race in 3 minutes, 51.13 seconds, good enough for a second-place event finish and the overall team crown. Henry, the runner of the last leg of the relay, was mobbed by her teammates immediately after crossing the finish line.

The Middle Tennessee men meanwhile claimed a second-place team finish as they completed the meet with 101.50 points.

"I am extremely proud of how both teams performed this weekend," said Middle Tennessee head coach Dean Hayes. "We had some great individual performances by a number of student-athletes and I am very happy for both teams on what they accomplished."

Cordairo Golden continued his brilliant season, capturing his second individual event championship of the weekend on Sunday when he won the men's triple jump. The Memphis, Tenn., native posted a mark of 52 feet, 1.75 inches (15.89 meters) to claim the event title. At the conclusion of the meet, Golden was named the Men's Most Outstanding Field Performer in recognition of his spectacular showing. He also finished the meet as the men's top scorer.

Kenneth Gilstrap had another fantastic competition as he defended his title in the men's 55 meters on Sunday, recording a time of 6.30 seconds. Drayton Calhoun followed immediately behind, clocking a 6.33.

Lucy Kapkiai led the Blue Raider women with the squad's only individual event title of the day, capturing the 5,000 meters in 17 minutes, 4.70 seconds.

The Blue Raider women got off to a solid Day 2 start when Makabu and Euphemia Edem recorded respective second and third-place finishes in the women's long jump. Makabu leaped 42-9.75 inches (13.05m), just one inch short of the mark of Jasmine Manuel of UL-Lafayette. Edem's jump came in at 41-5.75 (12.64m).

Despite not coming away with the title, Middle Tennessee controlled the women's 55-meter hurdles. Rosina Amenebede finished second in 7.86 seconds while the freshman Wilson followed immediately behind in 7.90 seconds to place third. Dudley posted a time of 7.97 to round out the top five. Meanwhile in the men's competition, Roscoe Payne finished second in 7.38 seconds.

Four Blue Raider men captured top-eight finishes in the 200 meters. Sophomore Kendall Bacchus finished third in 21.68 seconds. He was followed by Gilstrap who finished fifth while running a 21.76. Palmer placed seventh with a time of 21.84 and Calhoun closed out the top eight, logging a 21.97. Henry placed fourth and Wilson finished eighth in the women's competition with respective times of 24.60 and 25.08 seconds.

Henry also finished fifth in the women's 55-meter competition, logging a 7.17 while her fellow senior Amenebede finished in 7.22 seconds while placing eighth.

Justus David finished fourth in the men's one mile run with a time of 4:14.84. Robinson Simatei placed just outside the top eight, recording a time of 4:22.79 while finishing ninth overall. In the women's race, Kapkiai placed fifth, clocking a 5:03.98.

In the 400 meters, Steven Palmer finished fifth in 47.84 seconds while Asa Bowman ran a 49.15 to place eighth.

Simatei picked up a third-place finish in the men's 800 meters, logging a 1:55.65. David crossed the finish line in ninth place in a time of 2:02.98. Meanwhile Jackson came in fourth in the women's race, posting a time of 2:13.92. Autumn Gipson ran a 2:15.28 to finish sixth.

Select Blue Raiders will travel to Ames, Iowa, next weekend for the NCAA Last Chance Invitational hosted by Iowa State. Stay tuned to the Middle Tennessee track and field social media outlets for news this week on which athletes will participate.

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 Team Finishes

Women

1. Middle Tennessee – 108

2. North Texas - 107

3. FIU - 102

4. Arkansas State - 83.50

5. Western Kentucky - 82

6. South Alabama - 63.50

7. Louisiana-Lafayette - 36.50

8. Florida Atlantic - 32.50

9. Troy - 21

10. UALR - 15

11. Louisiana-Monroe - 12

Men

1. Western Kentucky - 160.50

2. Middle Tennessee - 101.50

3. Arkansas State - 90.50

4. Louisiana-Lafayette - 84.50

5. South Alabama - 62

6. Louisiana-Monroe - 61

7. UALR - 53

8. North Texas - 37

9. FIU - 12

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