Track & Field impressive on Day 1 in Nashville

Meet continues Saturday at 10 a.m.

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- Middle Tennessee senior Kiara Henry helped propel the Blue Raider track and field teams in the jumps and sprints events while Robinson Simatei directed the distance runners on Friday at the Vanderbilt Invitational.

Henry finished fifth in the women's 200 meters with a time of 23.98 seconds. Fellow Blue Raider Sheniece Daphness followed shortly behind, clocking a 24.50 to place seventh in the event.

Henry also helped lead a contingent of four Blue Raider women who recorded top-10 finishes in the long jump competition. The Atmore, Ala., product placed fourth with a leap of 19 feet, 4.25 inches (5.90 meters). She was trailed by Euphemia Edem and Amber Dandy who finished fifth and sixth with respective jumps of 19-0.75 (5.81m) and 18-9.75 (5.73m).

Nyeisha Wright won the women's long jump, posting a measurement of 20-0.50 (6.11m) to capture the event title. The victory is the third of her season to go along with a total of five top-five finishes in the competition.

Three Blue Raider men meanwhile notched top-10 finishes in the long jump on the men's side. Cordairo Golden paced the men with a fifth-place result, jumping 24-0.75 (7.33m). Kameron Rory leaped 22-10.00 (6.96m) while Junior Cadet rounded out the top 10 with a jump of 22-1.50 (6.74m).

Robinson Simatei helped pave the way for Middle Tennessee in the distance events. The sophomore logged a time of 9 minutes, 18.65 seconds to grab a third-place finish in the men's 3,000-meter steeplechase competition. He also finished seventh in the 1,500 meters while running a 3:56.60. On the women's side, Autumn Gipson, Lucy Kapkiai and Stephanie Smith each placed in the top 20 of the 1,500 meters. Gipson led the way with an 11th-place finish, clocking a 4:40.81. Kapkiai crossed the finish line in 4:43.22 to finish 13th and Smith placed 18th with a time of 4:48.22. The men's sprinters were not to be outdone on Friday as a trio of Blue Raiders placed in the top 10 of the 200-meter race. Noah Akwu was the first Middle Tennessee runner to cross the finish line as he finished second in 20.90 seconds. Ninth place went to Demetrius Shelton who clocked a time of 21.74 seconds while Rycine Ellison finished 10th in 21.75 seconds. "Today was a very good day for us," said Middle Tennessee head coach Dean Hayes. "We had great performances all around from a number of people. I was proud of the effort we put up today."

The meet will continue on Saturday with a number of field events kicking things off at 10 a.m. CT.

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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