

Men sixth, women eighth at VU-Belmont Opener

Season kicks off with Simatei, Dixon leading men's team

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[Complete Results \(Women\)](#) |

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. - The Middle Tennessee cross country squads kicked off their season Friday at the Belmont-VU Opener as the women's squad, running without their projected top three, placed eighth in the 4K (2.49 miles) while the men finished sixth in the 5K (3.11 miles).

Autumn Gipson paced the Blue Raiders' women's team; finishing 35th with a time of 16:04.10, followed closely by Rachel Islam, whose 16:12.80 put her in 39th. In her first

collegiate race, Julia Kitevski (16:36.70) raced alongside Islam for much of the race, but tailed off at the end to finish 52nd. The final two MT runners, Hannah Northam (17:54.50) and Tressinique Hampton (17:55.00) finished in 72nd and 73rd place, respectively.

Vanderbilt finished atop the team standings (33) as the Commodore's Hannah Jumper won the individual race in 14:09.10, though Kentucky was close behind with a team score of 34 after two Wildcats closed out the top three.

MT had a team score of 222.

On the men's side, the Blue Raiders proved that while they lacked a runner who could win the race, they were solid throughout the lineup. Robinson Simatei (16:07.30) and newcomer Alden Dixon (16:07.50) ran side-by-side nearly the entire race to finish 22nd and 23rd, respectively, while Silas Taiget (16:19.50) was close behind, finishing 31st.

Keith Davis (16:26.40) came in 39th as MT's fourth finisher, while Jamarious Jones (18:23.10) came in 79th.



Tennessee took home the team title on Friday as all five competitors finished no lower than 21st for a team score of 50. MT had a team score of 144, while fellow Sun Belt opponent Western Kentucky was fifth after scoring a 124.

The teams will compete next Saturday, September 8 at the PowerAde Invitational in Chattanooga, Tenn.

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