Men third, Women fourth at Sun Belt Championships

Kitevski, Gipson and Simatei earn All-Conference honors

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BOWLING GREEN, Ky. - Middle Tennessee's cross county squads put together strong showings at the 2012 Sun Belt Cross Country Championships on Saturday. The Blue Raider men finished third with 85 team points while the women came in fourth with 113 team points.

Predicted to finish sixth in the preseason poll, the women surprised the pack to finish fourth behind Georgia State, Arkansas State and Western Kentucky. Paced by Julia Kitevski, who navigated the women's 5,000 meter (3.10 mile) race in 18:17.20 to finish sixth, MT had all five scorers finish in the top 40.

Autumn Gipson, who had battled with Kitevski all season as MT's top runner, was close behind, finishing in 13th with a time of 18:45.20. Both Kitevski and Gipson earned All-Sun Belt honors for their performances. Kitevski was also voted the Sun Belt Women's Freshman of the Year.

Tressanique Hampton (19:09.20) and Stephanie Smith (19:24.10) were the next two MT finishers, placing 23rd and 31st, respectively. The final Blue Raider to accrue team points was Rachel Islam. Islam placed 40th with a time of 19:44.00. Hannah Northam (21:47.00) was 74th.

Individually, Katharine Showalter of Georgia State, who had won Sun Belt Runner of the Week honors five times this season, took the crown with a time of 17:41.10. Georgia State also won the team competition with just 52 points. Arkansas State had 58 points while Western Kentucky notched 83.

On the men's side, Middle Tennessee was predicted to finish third and did so behind an All-Sun Belt showing by Robinson Simatei. Simatei was the third overall finisher in the men's 8,000 meter (4.97

mile) race in 25:13.90.

The next two MT finishers, Keith Davis (26:01.80) and Alden Dixon (26:02.40) just missed all-conference honors, finishing 17th and 18th, respectively.

Daniel Ketter was the fourth Blue Raider across, finishing in 26:08.50 for 22nd place while Lyle Haywood (26:17.80) was 26th. MT's Silas Taiget (26:46.20), who finished 14th at last year's Sun Belt Championships was 33rd and Jamarious Jones (29:08.10) finished 66th.

Western Kentucky's Joseph Chebet took the men's individual crown after finishing in 24:46.70 and Arkansas-Little Rock won the team title with 58 points. North Texas had 85 team points, narrowly edging MT for second.

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