

Blue Raiders claim seven titles at Christmas Invitational

Dudley repeats as High Jump Champion

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee kicked off its indoor track and field season at the Murphy Center Saturday, claiming six individual titles and one relay title.



Senior Ann Dudley claimed the first Blue Raider title of the day after jumping 1.78 meters (five feet, 10 inches) in the women's high jump, topping Tennessee State's Gabrielle Todd and freshman teammate Pershawna Williams by .15 meters (5.75 feet).

In the women's long jump, senior Rosina Amenebede was fourth overall with 18 inch, 10.7 foot leap. India Hammond was the second Blue Raider finisher after jumping 5.47 meters (17 feet, 11.5 inches). Tennessee State's Ashontae Jackson won the event with a jump of 6.11 meters (20 feet, .5 inches).

MT's women claimed the No. 2 through No. 4 spots in the Triple Jump, as France Makabu and Hammond each cleared 11.9 meters (11.96 and 11.92, respectively), and Pershawna Williams jumped 11.48 meters (37 feet, eight inches).

Perhaps the most successful Blue Raider event of the day was the women's 55-meter hurdles, where Amenebede claimed the individual title with a time of 8.06 and MT landed four finishers in the Top 5. Dudley and Hammond were Nos. 2 and 3, notching times of 8.19 and 8.22 seconds. Christal Wilson earned fifth place after crossing the finish line in 8.30 seconds.

Amenebede again found success in the 55-meter dash, where she ran a 7.21 and finished third. Sheneice Daphness's time of 7.33 seconds was slightly slower than her personal best of 7.10, but matched her Sun Belt Championship time of last year and placed her fourth. Amber Dandy was eighth (7.45 seconds).

Wilson (26.65), Daphness (25.76) and Ginasia Hamilton (25.80) were neck and neck through the women's 200 meter dash, finishing fifth through seventh.

MT's Rachel Islam clinched the final women's individual title in the 800 meter run, where she and teammate Tressanique Hampton paced the course in 2:17.58 and 2:18.75 to finish first and second,

respectively.

Autumn Gipson (5:08.55) paced the Blue Raiders in the mile-run, as she crossed the finish line second and Julia Kitevski ran a time of 5:17.17 for third.

The final women's event of the day, the 4x440 yard relay was won by Tennessee State's team in 3:54.86, though MT's team of Jackson, Makabu, P. Williams and Gipson was close behind (4:04.01).

The men's lone individual jumping champion was Cordairo Golden, who earned the Triple Jump honors with a distance of 14.97 meters, or 49 feet and two and a half inches. Junior Cadet was close behind, grabbing second place and jumping 14.43 meters.

In the men's long jump, Golden was a second (7.31 meters) and Kameron Rory jumped 7.21 meters for third place. Tennessee State's Royce Dates (7.49 meters) out-jumped Golden by .18 meters for first place.

Bryson Lillard was the first MT male to compete, and set the tone for a successful day after finishing second in the 55 meter hurdles in 7.88 seconds.

Kendall Bacchus followed the trend in the 55-meter dash with another second place finish and a time of 6.48 seconds, only .03 slower than his personal best. Daniel Mitchell also ran the 55-meter dash, grabbing ninth place (6.66 seconds).

Bacchus also found success in the men's 200 meter, finishing second in 22.14 seconds.

In the 400 meter, Steven Palmer was No. 1 in 48.27 seconds while Andre Hamilton and Geoffrey Akena were Nos. 2 and 3, respectively. Hamilton notched a time of 49.02 and Akena finished in 49.81. The final MT finisher in the event was Demetrius Shelton, whose sprint of 50.86 seconds earned him seventh.

The last individual champion of the day was MT's Silas Taiget, who ran the mile in 4:25.92.

Robinson Simatei, in his only individual performance of the day, was second overall in the men's 800 meters with a time of 1:55.93. Asa Bowman also performed well in the event, finishing third (1:56.29). Daniel Ketter and Lyle Haywood were fourth and fifth.

The Blue Raiders's Alden Dixon (8:41.80), Keith Davis (8:43.72) and Taiget (8:47.16) stuck together throughout the men's 3000 meter run, finishing third through fifth, accordingly.

Middle Tennessee ended the Christmas Invitational in exciting fashion, grabbing two of the top four 4x440 yard relays and earning the title by nearly three seconds. The Blue Raiders' "A" relay squad, made up of Shelton, Hamilton, Akena and Lillard, cruised through the race in 3:22.40 with a comfortable lead throughout.

MT will continue its indoor track and field season on January 5 at the Tennessee State Invitational in Nashville, Tenn.

