

Blue Raiders perform well on Day 2 of Kentucky Invitational

Akwu grabs two titles in return to action

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Results (HTML)

LEXINGTON, Ky. - After an impressive showing on Day 1 of the Kentucky Invitational, Middle Tennessee's track and field athletes continued to impress on the final day.

Hurdles

In the preliminary rounds of the men's 60 meter hurdles, MT's Bryson Lillard qualified with a time of 8.40, but failed to replicate his speed in the finals, running a 8.58 for seventh place. Junior Cadet crossed the prelims finish line in 8.92, but failed to qualify for the finals.



On the women's side, Christal Wilson ran identical times of 8.72 seconds in the prelims and finals for 7th place while Ann Dudley qualified in 8.88 but false started, disqualifying her from finals competition. India Hammond and Rosina Amenebede also competed in the event, but Amenebede did not finish and Hammond's time of 8.98 failed to qualify her for the next round.

Dashes

MT's Noah Akwu, who represented Nigeria in the 2012 Summer Olympic Games, picked up where he left off on the track, nabbing both the men's 60 meter and 200 meter dash titles.

In the 60-meter race, Akwu qualified third with a time of 6.85 seconds, and improved by .11 seconds (6.74) in the finals to claim the title. MT's Drayton Calhoun and Daniel Mitchell also qualified for the final round. Mitchell (7.15) grabbed seventh place and Calhoun (7.17) was eighth.

Jasmine Abrams (7.81) and Sheniece Daphness (7.94) competed in the women's 60 meter dash, but did not qualify for the finale.

Akwu's second title of the day came in the men's 200 meter dash, where he finished just .5 seconds behind the track record, set by U.S. Olympian Tyson Gay in 2004. Akwu crossed the line in 20.91, over .6 seconds ahead of the nearest competitor, Arnez Hardnick of Tennessee (21.54). The Blue Raiders' James Messick (22.55) and Calhoun (24.72) also competed in the event, with Messick earning eighth place and Calhoun finishing 19th.

Daphness was the lone MT competitor in the women's 200, cruising through the track in 25.85 seconds for 21st.

Freshman Andre Hamilton, competing in just his second meet at the collegiate level, turned in a season-best performance in the men's 400 meter dash, racing around the track in 48.19 seconds and grabbing third place honors, just over .5 seconds behind the victor. Other MT athletes in the race were Messick, who grabbed seventh place with a time of 49.57, and Demetrius Shelton (eight place) with a time of 49.87.

In the women's 400, Ginasia Hamilton nabbed 13th place and Jasmine Nesbitt was 24th with times of 59.13 and 1:09.32, respectively.

Distance Events

Despite not earning any individual titles, MT's squad had similar success in the distance races as they did in sprints.

Asa Bowman (1:57.04) and Lyle Haywood (1:57.34) each finished in the top 10 of the men's 800 meter run-seventh and eighth, respectively, while Demarco Scales (1:59.68) was 13th and Jamarious Jones (1:59.84) was 14th.

On the women's side, Rachel Islam continued to run impressive times in the 800, finishing 12th in 2:18.99. Tressanique Hampton was 19th in the event, crossing the finish line in 2:25.47.

Symmetry showed in both the men's and women's mile races, as Autumn Gipson (5:01.61) and Robinson Simatei (4:16.35) were seventh in their respective races. Stephanie Smith (5:13.17) was 13th on the women's side and Daniel Ketter (4:23.62) was 13th on the men's. Keith Davis also competed in the men's race, finishing 17th (4:30.17)

Julia Kitevski was the lone MT competitor of either gender in the 3000 meter run, and performed well, finishing 11th overall with a time of 10:20.43.

Relays

The Blue Raider women's "B" relay team performed well in the 1600 meter relay, finishing sixth overall. Amber Jackson, France Makabu, Christal Wilson and Ginasia Hamilton cruised through the race in 3:57.44, a season-best for Middle Tennessee, with an average split time of 59.36 seconds.

Field Events

Though most of the Blue Raider field athletes competed on Day 1, MT had several athletes perform well in the triple jump. Makabu, who won last week's Ed Temple Invitational, jumped 12.12 meters (39-9.25 feet) for third place while India Hammond leaped 11.44 meters, or 37-6.50 feet. Hammond was sixth overall.

In the men's triple jump, three MT athletes finished in the top 10. Cordairo Golden was second overall with a jump of 49-6.25 feet (15.09 meters) and Kameron Rory was fifth (13.71 meters). Nigel Jones, in just his second collegiate event, hit a mark of 13.68 meters (43-10 feet), for seventh.

The Blue Raiders are back in action next weekend at the Niswonger Invitational in Johnson City, Tenn.

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