Sun Belt Championships await Track and Field

Women defending title, men look to go out on top

February 23, 2013 · @MTAthletics

Complete Release (PDF) | Sun Belt Preview: Dean Hayes (PDF)

Championship Page | Schedule of Events

This Week...
Middle Tennessee heads to the Sun Belt Indoor Championships in Jonesboro, Ark. The meet is scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 24 through Monday, Feb. 25. The official championship page is located here. For a complete schedule of events, click here.

Saying Goodbye...
This is the final SBC Indoor competition for MT, which is making the move to Conference USA next year.

Last time out...
Middle Tennessee hosted the Valentine Invitational on Feb. 9, where the team won 13 titles and set 20 personal records.

Golden Jumper...
Cordairo Golden won the men's high jump and triple jump at the Valentine Invitational on, while taking second in the long jump. Golden hit marks of 1.93 meters and 15.50 meters in the high and triple jumps, respectively. He has now broke the 50 foot mark twice this season in the men's triple jump.

New Kids in the Blocks..
Freshmen Alden Dixon, Shadrack Matelong and Eluid Rutto are three of MT's top distance performers, setting the tone for a productive future in the Blue Raider program. In the mile, Dixon and Matelong are fourth and fifth on the Sun Belt Performance Chart, while Rutto won SBC Runner of the Week on Feb. 9. Matelong is also ranked fifth in the men's 3000 meters, and Rutto is fourth in the men's 800 meters.

Improving every week...

Middle Tennessee's track and field teams have set at least 20 personal records in each of the past three meets in preperation for the championships. Though they were not personal bests, Cordairo Golden and France Makabu each increased their distances in the triple jump, and sit atop the Sun Belt Performance Chart.

The Trophy Shelf...
Four Blue Raiders have earned five Sun Belt Athlete of the Week honors so far this season:
Male Track: Noah Akwu (Jan. 16), Eluid Rutto (Feb. 6)
Male Field: Cordairo Golden (Jan. 9 and Jan. 30)
Female Field: Rosina Amenebede (Jan. 9)

Atop the Sun Belt...
Six Blue Raiders hold seven top spots on the Sun Belt Performance list, and several athletes are ranked in the top 10. For a complete ranking, turn to pages 4-7.

National Rankings...
With NCAA Nationals just two weeks away, Middle Tennessee has had several athletes qualify, and five currently ranked in the top 30. For a complete ranking, turn to page 3.

Comments from the Coaches...
Head Coach Dean Hayes: "We'll miss our time in the Sun Belt. We've had great relationships with the coaches, teams and the conference office. We've had a good 13 years with them. We won the first four years of Sun Belt indoor competition, so we'd like to go out on top."

Thoughts on women's chance of winning...
"On the women's side, it will likely be a pretty low scoring competition, which is good for us. It took us just 108 points to win last year, and I suspect the points total will be similar. There are four or five teams that have a good shot at the title: North Texas, FIU, Western, Arkansas State and us.

Thoughts on men's chance of winning...
"Arkansas State is definitely a favorite. It's at their place, which is a big advantage, and they've had a great season. We'll need people to put together solid performances and get us points if we want to have a chance."

Assistant Coach Kelly Carter: "I think we'll compete really well this weekend. We've prepared really well, and have had good performances throughout the year. I think people will step up. With this being our last Sun Belt meet, it'd be nice to win. We came into the Sun Belt and won it, so it'd be nice to leave the Sun Belt as a winner."

Assistant Coach Keith Vroman: "We've enjoyed the Sun Belt, and with this being the last meet, we'll do the best we can and see what happens. Our distance runners should have a solid chance- Lucy (Kapkiai) on the women's side and basically the freshman class (Alden Dixon, Eluid Rutto and Shadrack Matelong) will hopefully do pretty well."