

T&F produce career day at Birmingham

15 set new personal-bests while Rutto sets second school record

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. - The Middle Tennessee track & field teams used its second trip to the Birmingham CrossPlex to have 15 athletes set new personal-best times, five set their new collegiate marks, two claim first place and one set a new Middle Tennessee Indoor record.

The Blue Raiders faced three nationally ranked teams; the No. 7 Florida State men, No. 5 Georgia women and No. 8 LSU women.

The day was highlighted by Eliud Rutto running the 800-meter, taking home a first

place finish along with the MT indoor school record. Rutto finished in 1:50.19, besting the previous mark of 1:50:27 set by Festus Chemanoi in 2009. He also holds the MT outdoor school record in the 800-meter set last season with a time of 1:48.07.

Emmanuel Tugumisirize was the other Blue Raider to claim first place along with setting a new personal-best time of 47.05 in the 400-meter. Tugumisirize also helped the men's 4x400 team of Palmer, Shelton and Hamilton place second with a time of 3:10.55.

"We had some pretty good performances and it showed us that we can compete," Head Coach Dean Hayes said. "It was great for Rutto to win the 800-meter, Emmanuel to win the 400-meter and the men's 4x400 relay to finish second."

Four other male runners set or tied their personal-records. Tahir Walsh finished 11th (6.88) in the 60-meter dash while Junior Cadet tied his previous mark (7.10) and placed 15th. In the men's 200-meter, Demetrius Shelton placed a team-high ninth (21.75), while Walsh (22.36) and James Messick (22.46) set new personal-best times and finished 27th and 31st, respectively.

The women's squad set 12 personal-best times with four running events for the first time. Shaina Johnson finished third collegiality (57.31) in the 400-meter and headlined a group of four runners that



includes Crystal Gray (57.63), Chelsea Caldwell (59.88) and Rachel Islam (1:00.36), who all hit new bests.

Sheniece Daphness had a career-day, setting two personal-record times in the 60-meter (7.80) and 200-meter (25.395). Along with Daphness, freshman Jessica Howell finished the 200 in 25.83 and set a new distance in the shot put with 9.21 meters.

In the women's triple jump, India Hammond (12.21 meters) and Pershawna Williams (12.06) finished sixth and seventh, respectively. Williams hit a new personal-best distance in the triple-jump.

Jackline Kiprono ran her first collegiate 3,000-meter for seventh overall (9:54.37), while fellow freshman Rhema Cheriuyot set her new best time of 10:32.05 for 25th overall.

"Next week we go to Vanderbilt, which is a new 300-meter track," said Head Coach Dean Hayes. "It really seems to be a good surface. We took a few athletes down there in December and had some good performances. That will be a big meet and will have several SEC teams."

Middle Tennessee will travel to Nashville to compete at the Vanderbilt Indoor Invitational next Saturday.

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