



CONTACT INFORMATION

Shelby Hild
Assistant Director of Strategic Communications
e: hilds@umkc.edu
o: 816.235.1053 | c: 309.241.9801
UMKCKangaroos.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 16, 2017

Roos Return To Lawrence for Rock Chalk Challenge

LAWRENCE, Kan. – For the second consecutive week, the UMKC softball team (6-16) will travel to Arrocha Ballpark. The Roos, who went 2-0 last weekend at the Jayhawk Invitational, are set to participate in the Rock Chalk Challenge this weekend.

UMKC is scheduled to play a single game against tournament host Kansas (15-9) on Thursday night before matching up with Tulsa (15-10) and Southeast Missouri (14-6) on Friday. The Roos will conclude competition on Saturday against Omaha (8-14).

Follow

Live stats for UMKC's games are available at UMKCStats.com.

About the Roos

Redshirt junior **Kendra Leach** (Easton, Kan.) is batting a team-high .421 with six doubles and three triples through 21 games. Leach has also drawn 10 walks, the most of any Roo.

Shortstop **Morgan Byrn** (Lawrence, Kan.) has taken 37 total bases in the first 22 games of the season, going 22-for-58 at the plate (.379) while smashing a team-leading four home runs.

Junior **Ashlin O'Brien** (Fond du Lac, Wis.) has hit a pair of home runs while **Kelsey Goodwin** (Broken Arrow, Okla.), **Faith Willis** (Kearney, Mo.), **Bri Sims** (Rowlett, Texas) and **Abbi Johnson** (Midwest City, Okla.) have each hit one out of the park this season.

Freshman **Sydney Garcia** (Kansas City, Mo.) has been caught stealing just once out of her seven stolen base attempts this season. She also leads all newcomers at the plate, batting .270 with five doubles and six RBIs.

UMKC played its first nationally-ranked opponent of the season on March 7 in a doubleheader with No. 24 Arkansas. Both games were decided in five innings, as the Roos fell 10-0 and 13-1. Prior to these games, the last time UMKC faced a ranked opponent was last season when the Roos played two games against No. 13 Oklahoma after a single game with No. 17 Minnesota.

Byrn received Western Athletic Conference Hitter of the Week laurels on Feb. 27 after bombing three home runs in two games at the UTA Invitational. She went 7-for-14 from the plate over the course of five games and accounted for five of the team's 11 RBIs.

The Roos went 2-3 at the Battle at the Beach in Conway, S.C., as freshman **Alex Larson** (Overland Park, Kan.) captured her first career wins, both against Rider. The freshman right-hander pitched all five innings of UMKC's 8-0 victory on Feb. 18, allowing just three hits and one walk. In Sunday's 5-3 win over the Broncs, Larson came in for relief to pitch the final 3.2 innings and gave up just two hits while throwing two strikeouts. As a result, Larson was named WAC Pitcher of the Week on Feb. 20.

Leach and Sims were each named to the 2017 Preseason All-WAC team in a poll by the league's coaches.

Sims, a 2016 All-WAC first team selection, returns to the field for UMKC this season with second-team members Goodwin and Byrn. The Roos finished 24-26 overall and 10-5 in the WAC in 2016.

Scouting the Opponents

Kansas leads the all-time series over UMKC, 33-2, with the Roos' last win against the Jayhawks occurring in Kansas City, Mo., in 2011. The two programs were scheduled to match-up at last year's Rock Chalk Challenge, but the game was cancelled due to a mix of rain and snow in the area. Kansas comes into this weekend's tournament on a three-game winning streak after going undefeated at last weekend's Jayhawk Invitational.

UMKC has been unable to overcome Tulsa in all of its 14 meetings. The last time the two teams met was at last season's Rock Chalk Challenge where the Golden Hurricane took the game, 10-0, in five innings. Tulsa has won four of its last five games, including wins against Montana, No. 23 California, Texas Tech and Arkansas.

For the second time this season, UMKC will face Southeast Missouri State. The Roos fell to the Redhawks, 4-2, in their third game of the We Back Pat Tournament that was hosted by UMKC at Missouri 3&2 Complex on March 3-5. Byrn led the way for the Roos at the plate, hitting her team-leading fourth home run of season.

UMKC played Omaha three times last season, with its final game resulting in a 10-5 victory by the Roos. O'Brien and Goodwin each went 3-for-4 from the plate to lead the team. O'Brien also batted in two runners while Goodwin recorded two runs of her own.

Up Next

The Roos will travel to the west coast for the first time this season, playing in the Amy S. Harrison Classic in Riverside, Calif., next weekend. UMKC will be joined at the tournament by Pacific and UC Riverside.

For more information on UMKC softball, like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

- UMKC -