



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

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UMKC Sweeps Steeplechase in Outdoor Season Opener

EMPORIA, Kan. – For the first time in their careers, junior **Elizabeth Nolke** (Lee’s Summit, Mo.) and freshman **Daylan Quinn** (Mountain View, Mo.) competed in the steeplechase for the UMKC track and field team at the ESU Twilight Invitational on Friday, and swept the event.

Nolke finished 15 seconds ahead of her closest competitor, crossing the line in 12:16.43. Quinn finished five seconds ahead of the second-place finisher with a time of 10:03.31.

“Both competed and wanted to win,” commented head coach Shameika McField. “It was their first time competing in the event and there will be plenty for them to learn about it. The first part is having confidence and faith in themselves to just run.”

UMKC turned in 12 top-five finishes at the meet, including a victory by the women’s 4x400-meter relay team. The quartet of **Rachel Culberson** (Florissant, Mo.), **Hanna Miller** (Savannah, Mo.), **Janelle Johnson** (St. Louis, Mo.) and **Chantel Bethune** (St. Louis, Mo.) finished in 3:50.59.

Pole vaulter **Lukas van der Watt** (Vrendenburg, South Africa) finished second in the outdoor event, clearing 4.85 meters. Senior **Blake Hocking** (Lawrence, Kan.) used his strength to win the men’s shot put with a toss of 17.93 meters and the men’s discus with a throw of 50.20 meters.

“It was a decent start to the outdoor season,” McField said. “I thought there were some strong performances, but overall, everyone can and will improve as the season goes on. Whether the performance was good or bad, this team is confident, talented and eager to achieve better.”

Several student-athletes competed in various events for the first time in their UMKC careers and others were able to improve marks in their respective individual events.

“It’s great to finally be outdoors,” commented associate head coach Benaud Shirley. “We have been working hard for the last three weeks and today the student-athletes

competed hard and had some solid performances. Hopefully we will build off of this meet and progress throughout the rest of the season.”

UMKC will return to Emporia, Kan., on April 1 for the ESU Relays.

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