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UMKC Sweeps WAC Outdoor Championship Team Titles

EDINBURG, Texas – For the first time since the 2000 season, the UMKC track and field program has swept its conference team titles after winning the 2017 Western Athletic Conference Outdoor Track and Field Championships on Saturday.

It is just the third team title in school history for the men’s team and the fourth for the women.

“I am extremely proud of the team and our staff of coaches, strength and conditioning and athletic training,” commented head coach **Shameika McField**. “It’s been a long time coming and we knew coming in what the potential would be, but half the battle is getting the team to believe and trust in themselves.

“Their confidence has grown each competition this year and I think after the indoor championships, they were determined not to fall short. It was amazing to have a vision and the people around you believe in it.

“We talk about legacy and culture as a team a lot. They created memories and history at the same time. It was fulfilling to see them fulfill their dreams and accomplish their goals in such a classy manner. They replaced all doubt with determination, and when that happens, you will never be denied success. In our case, it was victory.”

“All credit goes to the student-athletes,” said associate head coach **Benaud Shirley**. “We knew going into these championships that it was going to be a team effort to get the job done. It was just great to see the teams stepping up and competing hard.”

“I am extremely proud of the athletes today,” mentioned assistant coach **Brett Guemmer**. “Nothing was perfect by any means, but the athletes went for every point. We put expectations on everyone and each person showed up. If anyone came up short, it seemed like the next person was always there to make up the points we missed out on. Today was a complete team effort and I couldn’t be more proud of our athletes’ performances and support for each other.”

“This is an amazing feeling,” said jumper and sprinter **Jada Steele**. “Both our men’s and women’s teams have worked hard all season. Going into the competition, we knew that

we were capable of doing the unthinkable. Everyone stepped up and fought hard to ultimately come out on top.”

“Winning the WAC Championship on both the men’s and the women’s side felt great,” shared men’s steeplechase champion **Marcus Johnson**. “It was an awesome experience to be able to compete with teammates who want the victory as much as you and to have a dedicated coaching staff that challenges you to be better.”

The men’s team witnessed five individual champions and the 4x100-meter relay team grab gold medals on the final day of the WAC Championships.

“I am elated and so blessed to be a Roo,” said senior hurdler **Zak Snow**. “With the continuous support from one another and our coaching staff, UMKC can continue to make history.”

The 4x100-meter quartet of **Christopher Bryan** (St. Catherine, Jamaica), **Chadayne Walker** (Portmore, Jamaica), **Terrone Garner** (St. Louis, Mo.) and **Justin Martin** (Kansas City, Mo.) finished first in a time of 40.62 seconds to begin running events for the Roos.

Junior **Fred Boyd** (Detroit, Mich.) continued the trend by beating out his opponent by a slim 0.003 seconds in the 110-meter hurdles with a personal best performance of 14.22 seconds. **Darrien Case** (Parkville, Mo.) collected the final gold medal in the 1,500-meter run after crossing the line in 4:01.63. The sophomore also placed third in the 800-meter run with a time of 1:56.45 to grab his second medal of the afternoon.

“This was the greatest athletic experience I have ever had,” Case expressed. “Being a championship as an individual and as a team, both the men’s and women’s squad, will never be forgotten in my life. Each person went and stepped up at the right moments and everyone gave it their best. All the work we have put in has paid off.”

In the field, Bryan won his second individual title of the championships after winning the triple jump with a leap of 15.00 meters. With this performance, the sophomore moved into the top-five all-time performers list at UMKC. Junior **Jeremy Harr** (Mukwonago, Wis.) registered a personal best mark in the triple jump as well, leaping 14.83 meters for a fifth-place finish.

Thrower **Blake Hocking** (Lawrence, Kan.) picked up his second gold medal with a victorious toss of 17.84 meters in the shot put. In the same event, **Jacob Hockman** (Centralia, Mo.) snagged his third personal best of the championship meet with a sixth-place heave of 14.31 meters. The final first-place finish in the field came from **Harpreet Dosanjh** (Overland Park, Kan.), as the junior threw the javelin 62.24 meters to rank second all-time in UMKC program history in the event.

Aside from the first-place finishes, the men’s squad also tallied 14 top-five performances in the event finals and six individual personal bests were recorded in five events.

Sprinters Walker and Martin went one-two, respectively, in the 100-meter dash with personal best times of 10.57 seconds and 10.64 seconds, respectively. Both Roos returned to the track for the 200-meter dash, where Martin broke the UMKC school record in the event by 0.01 seconds with a second-place finish of 21.25 seconds, while Walker claimed the bronze medal with a time of 21.40 seconds. Bryan continued to shine for the Roos, finishing fourth in the 110-meter hurdles with a personal best performance of 14.56 seconds.

Only four total team points separated the women's team from the second-place finisher at this year's WAC Championships. With **Sarah Fogarty's** (O'Fallon, Mo.) first-place performance of 17:22.60 in the 5,000-meter run, the Roos jumped up to second place ahead of the final event of the meet – the 4x400-meter relay. The quartet of **Kylie Conrow** (Bowling Green, Mo.), **Rachel Culberson** (Florissant, Mo.), **Hanna Miller** (Savannah, Mo.) and **Chantel Bethune** (St. Louis, Mo.) stepped up and took the gold medal to seal the title for the Roos.

Graduate student **Remy Abrought** (Kansas City, Mo.) set the tone for the women's team, capturing the gold medal in the 100-meter hurdles with a time of 13.83 seconds. Miller continued the trend on the track, winning the 800-meter run with a time of 2:13.40. After advancing to the event finals with a first-place performance in the 400-meter dash on Friday, Bethune darted to another top finish, crossing the line in 54.65 seconds. The senior also collected the bronze medal in the 200-meter dash with a school record time of 24.13 seconds.

"It was a pleasure competing with UMKC for five years," shared Bethune. "I have been able to accomplish my goals, such as breaking the school records in the 200-meter dash and 400-meter dash. I am so glad that I have a team that I can rely on, and most importantly, one that is very supportive."

Similarly to the men's team, the women's squad turned in 13 top-five performances in nine individual events with six student-athletes notching personal bests.

"This feeling that we all have right now is what makes everything worth it," commented distance runner **Chandler Carreon**. "Words cannot express how proud I am of this track family. Through our hard days and injuries, we have had our eyes set on something like this. Tonight we proved that determination and heart can go a long way."

In the field, sisters **Matia Finley** (Lawrence, Kan.) and **Rebecca Finley** (Lawrence, Kan.) heaved personal bests in the hammer throw with marks of 48.69 meters and 43.68 meters, respectively. **Gabriel Foster** (Portmore, Jamaica) cleared 1.65 meters in the high jump for the first time in her collegiate career. Both **Dasjah Mason** (St. Louis, Mo.) and **Carolyn Ross** (St. Louis, Mo.) hit personal best marks in the triple jump with leaps of 12.14 meters and 11.69 meters, respectively.

“It was an amazing experience for me,” said Ross. “Each person put it all on the line. We’ve been working all season for this and it was a great feeling to go out there and have both teams win and make history. I couldn’t have asked for a better team to compete with.”

“This was a great overall performance for us,” commented assistant coach **Ryan Hayes**. “In the pole vault, Christy stepped up for the win and set a new school record. Then the women’s high jump showed up and had a good contribution for the team. On the men’s side, Preston surprised us with a second place finish in an event we didn’t know if we would score in. Ultimately, every point mattered and this team deserved it.”

“Kansas City sweeping the conference titles speaks for itself” shared assistant coach **Brian Bishop**. “Too many great performances to list, as each athlete and coach put their heart into these victories. I am so proud of the whole team and am looking forward to taking several athletes to the first round of nationals.”

The top-48 declared student-athletes from the NCAA West Region will travel to the first round of the NCAA Championships in Austin, Texas, on May 26-27.

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