



UMKC ATHLETICS

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Roos Take FAU Down to the Wire in Holiday Classic Finale

BOCA RATON, Fla. – The UMKC women’s basketball team (3-11) fought back from an early deficit before falling to FAU (6-5) in a hard-fought 65-55 loss in the final game of the FAU Holiday Classic.

The game started in a nearly perfect fashion for the Roos as **Daijane Dillard** (Los Angeles, Calif.) came away with a steal on FAU’s opening possession and **Kristen Moore** (Chicago, Ill.) followed with a jumper on the other end. The Owls quickly responded with a 9-3 run to dampen the UMKC energy.

An **India Johnson** (Overland Park, Kan.) three-pointer tied the game at 14-14 at the 2:47 mark in the first quarter, the second of six ties in the contest, but FAU put together a strong run to create separation. The Owls scored five straight points to end the opening period, the start of a 20-7 run that continued throughout the remainder of the first half.

Shots simply refused to fall for the Roos in the first two quarters of action, with the team shooting a combined 9-of-34 (26.5%) from the field and 3-of-17 (17.6%) from beyond the arc. The tough shooting left UMKC staring down a sizeable 34-21 deficit at halftime, but the resilient squad would once again prove they would not be put away easily.

“Although we didn’t get the outcome we wanted I believe we had tremendous improvement and we are playing our best basketball right now,” commented head coach **Jacie Hoyt**. “It would have been easy for us to lay down and quit after the first half when shots weren’t falling, but our kids competed and fought back.

The third quarter opened up with five straight UMKC points coming from a pair of makes from the foul line by Moore and a three-pointer from **Aries Washington** (Kansas City, Mo.) to trim the FAU lead to single digits. Washington continued to dominate the remainder of the third period in her efforts to get the Roos within striking distance. Washington scored 16 points in the period, including three huge makes from beyond the arc. She finished her day with a game-high 20 points and also tallied a team-high nine rebounds and two assists.

UMKC entered the final period of play with a full head of steam after igniting a 7-0 run over the last four minutes of action in the third quarter, capped off with an and-one from Washington to give the Roos a 42-41 lead. The slim advantage was the team's first lead since claiming a 2-0 margin to open the game.

After successfully erasing the 13 point halftime deficit, the game looked to be poised for an intense finish and the fourth quarter proved to be highly contested. The final ten minutes saw three ties and three lead changes as both sides battled vigorously to claim victory.

At the 7:20 mark, Moore would connect on a pair of free throws to give the Roos a 47-45 lead and would go perfect from the charity stripe again moments later to reclaim a 49-48 lead with just over five minutes to play. The redshirt junior was terrific throughout the contest, dropping in 16 points to go along with four rebounds and one assist. Moore finished the game perfect from the foul line as well connecting on all six attempts.

The last five minutes belonged to FAU, however, as the Roos were unable to close out a win. A 7-0 run, including back to back three-pointers, pushed the Owls lead to 56-49 with 2:06 to play in the game. Johnson would sink a shot from long range to answer the run, but UMKC was unable to come up with the stops needed to get within one possession as the clock ran out.

Despite the end result coming in a loss, the Roos solid performance the tournament opener and a strong second half in the finale leaves the team with momentum to build on. Team defense was particularly strong in the second half in today's game, as UMKC limited FAU to shooting 7-of-27 (25.9%) from the field in the final 20 minutes and was vital in the forging the comeback.

Impressive individual performances in the two-day event lead to All-Tournament Team honors for both Aries Washington and Kristen Moore. Washington finished the event with a combined 30 points and 16 rebounds while Moore finished with 33 points and 12 rebounds.

"Our team learned a lot from this loss," said Hoyt. "This tournament was a great experience for us from top to bottom."

UMKC will wrap up its nonconference with a home contest against Central Christian College of the Bible on Tuesday, Jan. 2 at 7 p.m. CT. The game will have be broadcast free of charge on the [WAC Digital Network](#) free of charge and will have [Live Stats](#) available.

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