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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 2, 2018

Roos Drop Two Games to Open Play in Blues City Classic

MEMPHIS, Tenn. – The UMKC softball team (3-9) opened play in the Blues City Classic with a narrow one-run loss to IPFW before falling to Bradley in two games on Friday.

Junior **Olivia Fluehr** (Loves Park, Ill.) made her first start of the season in the opening game against IPFW and put together a solid outing in the circle. Fluehr tossed 5.1 innings and allowed just a pair of runs on three hits in a no-decision effort.

The Roos got their offense in their first at-bat as **Ashlin O'Brien** (Fond du Lac, Wis.), who reached base on a hit by pitch and would advance to second on a stolen base, would cross the plate on an RBI double from **Morgan Byrn** (Lawrence, Kan.). After two scoreless innings from Fluehr, Byrn hammered a solo shot, her second home run of the season, to extend the Roos lead to 2-0 in the third inning.

While continuing to cruise in the circle, Fluehr led off the top of the fourth with her third home run of the season for a three run advantage. The offense was unable to generate any further damage against IPFW starter Bailey Benefiel who would allow just one hit the rest of the way following Fluehr's solo shot.

IPFW cut into the lead in the bottom of the fourth with a solo home run from Morganne Denny but would add nothing more through five innings of play. UMKC missed a major opportunity to add valuable insurance runs to their lead in the top of the sixth, as Benefiel loaded the bases after consecutive walks with two outs in the frame but escaped the jam with a strikeout to end the inning.

Fluehr ran into trouble in bottom of sixth putting a pair of runners on base with walks, splitting the free passes with a fielder's choice to record the first out. **Lynsey Conner** (Peggs, Okla.) came on in relief to try and keep the lead intact. After giving up a single to her first batter, loading the bases, Conner induced a key ground ball to get the lead runner out at home.

With two outs and the bases still juiced, a hit by pitch and error to consecutive hitters brought in three runs to give IPFW the lead at 4-3. The Roos were unable to put

anything together in their final at-bat, ending the game on a hard lineout from O'Brien that doubled off **Kamrie Harrison** (Moore, Okla.) at second base.

The contest got off to a hot start with Bradley scratching across a run on a sac fly in the top of the first and was followed up with a big answer from the Roos in the bottom half of the frame. An RBI single from Morgan Byrn with no outs got the scoring started and the inning was capped off with a three-run bomb from Fluehr, her team-best fourth of the season, to give UMKC an early 4-1 lead after one.

Byrn and Fluehr both had brilliant offensive showings in the two games. Byrn finished the day going 5 for 6 with a home run, double, and three RBI's. Fluehr's two home runs and five RBI's, up to a team-high 12 on the year, both led the Roos on the day.

Starting pitcher **Andra O'Brien** (Fond du Lac, Wis.) was unable to shut down the Braves, who struck back with three runs in the second and another in the third to reclaim a one-run advantage, finishing O'Brien's day in the circle.

UMKC refused to go down quietly at the plate and used an error to climb back on top in the bottom of the fourth. A leadoff walk to **Alyx Bloom** (Clay Center, Kan.) was followed by a Bradley error to set up an excellent scoring chance. With two outs and two aboard in scoring position, **Maegan Rollow** (Broken Arrow, Okla.) drove in both runners with single up the middle to take yet another lead at 6-5.

Lynsey Conner and Olivia Fluehr suffered a similar fate in the circle in their attempts to keep Bradley off the board. The two combined to throw four innings, allowing seven earned runs on seven hits as the Braves jumped out in front for a final time in a seven-run fifth inning and walked away with a 12-8 victory.

UMKC is set to Bradley for a second time in the event tomorrow morning at 9 a.m. CT in their lone game on Saturday. The team will square off with UL Monroe and Memphis on Sunday, Mar. 4 at 11:15 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. CT to close out the Blues City Classic.

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