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Southern Utah men, Western Illinois women take early lead at the 2005 Mid-Con Outdoor Track & Field Championships

KANSAS CITY, MO. — Five events are in the books at the 2005 Mid-Continent Conference Outdoor Track & Field Championships being held on the campus of UMKC in Kansas City, Mo. Southern Utah and Western Illinois jumped out to early leads in the men's and women's competitions, respectively, with two days remaining in the Championships.

The Southern Utah men notched 52 points on day one, a 35-point advantage over second-place Western Illinois (17). Valparaiso and UMKC followed in third and fourth place, with seven and two points, respectively. Chicago State and Oral Roberts did not post any points on day one.

The Western Illinois women's squad holds a slight advantage over a clustered women's field. The Westerwinds notched 39 points on the first day of competition to earn a 17-point lead over Southern Utah and Valparaiso, which tied for second place with 22 points apiece. Oral Roberts and UMKC are not far behind, as both schools notched 17 points to tie for fourth place. Chicago State's women's squad did not factor into the scoring on day one.

Southern Utah's men's team built their early lead after winning both of the men's events contested Thursday. **Troy Gent** (59.86m) took home the gold medal in the hammer throw for the T-Birds, edging Western Illinois' **Robb Pfrank** (59.62m). SUU dominated the 10,000-meter run, as T-Bird runners finished in the Top 5 slots. **Jess Baumgartner** (32:43.58) beat out teammate **Chad Sanada** (33:17.16) for the title.

Aubrey Martin, the 2004 champion in the shot put and discus, got the Westerwinds off to a strong start by winning the hammer throw with a toss of 55.38m. Southern Utah's **Marie Muscato** won the pole vault, clearing the 3.65-meter mark to edge out Oral Roberts' **Nikol Zachery** (3.50m). UMKC's **Christine Ensign** closed out the first day of competition by winning the 10,000-meter run with a time of 37:17.41, which was 31 seconds better than the runner-up (Western Illinois' **Beth Whalen**).

The 2005 Mid-Con Outdoor Track & Field Championships resume on Friday, May 13 at 9:30 a.m.

Now in its 23rd year, the Mid-Continent Conference is comprised of nine member institutions - Centenary College of Louisiana, Chicago State University, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), Oakland University, Oral Roberts University, Southern Utah University, Valparaiso University and Western Illinois University. The league offers championships in 19 sports.

-30-

MEN'S TEAM STANDINGS		
1.	Southern Utah	52.0
2.	Western Illinois	17.0
3.	Valparaiso	7.0
4.	UMKC	2.0
5.	Chicago State	0.0
6.	Oral Roberts	0.0

WOMEN'S TEAM STANDINGS		
1.	Western Illinois	39.0
2.	Southern Utah	22.0
	Valparaiso	22.0
4.	Oral Roberts	17.0
	UMKC	17.0
6.	Chicago State	0.0