



PRESS RELEASE

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS NATURALS

3000 GENE GEORGE BLVD • SPRINGDALE, AR 72762 • PH: 479.927.4900 • FAX: 479.756.8088

WWW.NWANATURALS.COM  /NATURALS  NWANATURALS  @NWANATURALS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 15, 2022

SERIES PREVIEW: KEVIN KOPPS AND SAN ANTONIO COMING TO TOWN FOR SIX GAMES

Naturals return home and welcome former Razorback and Golden Spikes Award winner to Arvest Ballpark

ON THE WEB: <https://www.milb.com/northwest-arkansas/news/series-preview-kopps-and-san-antonio-coming-to-town>

SPRINGDALE, ARK – After a series in North Little Rock, the Northwest Arkansas Naturals return home, and welcome in former Arkansas Razorbacks pitcher, 2021 Golden Spikes Award winner **Kevin Kopps** and the San Antonio Missions (San Diego Padres Double-A) for six games at Arvest Ballpark.

The Missions (18-21, 56-50) come to Springdale having already secured a playoff spot, winning the Texas League South Division's first half title, with a 38-29 record, 3.0 games ahead of second-place Frisco. San Antonio's pitching staff has ranked among the Texas League's best from the start of the season, third in ERA (4.56) and tied fourth in WHIP (1.46) with the fewest home runs (96) allowed of any Double-A team.

Back for his second season with the Missions and his second year in professional baseball, five-year Razorback Kevin Kopps (2017-2021) has pitched in 33 games this season, with a 1-1 record, four saves and a 3.98 ERA (18 ER in 40.2 IP) with 40 strikeouts. Notably, Kopps recorded the final three outs of a combined no-hitter against the Travelers on May 15, San Antonio's first of two in the span of three games/four days.

San Antonio's roster contains four of MLB Pipeline's Top 30 prospects in the Padres organization, highlighted by No. 9 Kopps, in addition to 2021 Naturals pitcher **Nolan Watson**, who is projected to start Friday's game.

The Naturals (13-26, 44-63) are coming off a series that featured the long-awaited Double-A debuts of catcher and 2021 draft pick **Luca Tresh** (MLB Pipeline Royals' No. 25), as well as outfielder **Diego Hernandez** (MLB Pipeline Royals' No. 30).

Outfielder **Tyler Gentry** (MLB Pipeline Royals No. 26) and infielder **CJ Alexander** continued their stellar play in August, combining for five home runs and 10 runs batted in. Over five games, Gentry hit .389 (7-for-18) with a .476 on-base percentage. Relief pitcher **Zach Haake** fired 6.0 scoreless innings across a pair of three-inning outings, coming to strike out nine batters across his two appearances.

The Naturals roster consists of a whopping 11 of MLB Pipeline's Top 30 prospects in the Royals organization, the most of any affiliate in Kansas City's system. The starting rotation features recently acquired **Andrew Hoffmann** (MLB Pipeline Royals No. 27) and **T.J. Sikkema** (MLB Pipeline Royals No. 21), as well as right-hander **Jonathan Bowlan**, (MLB Pipeline Royals No. 5), who is currently working his way back from Tommy John surgery and is projected to start Tuesday's series opener.

Through 107 games, the Naturals are hitting .258 as a team, but rank third in the Texas League in runs scored (618) and tied first in the league steals (137).

As a team, the Missions are hitting .267, which is good for the third-best batting average in the Texas League. 137 steals are tied with the Naturals for the most in the Texas League, meaning the basepaths should be busy in this six-game set.

The six-game series opens Tuesday, August 16 at 7:05 p.m. CT and features a **Nick Pratto** bobblehead giveaway on Saturday, August 20 for the first 1,500 fans in courtesy of Unify Financial Credit Union.

The Naturals are the Double-A Affiliate of the Kansas City Royals. They play at state-of-the-art Arvest Ballpark in Springdale, Arkansas. For more information, including ticket options, promotions, groups, visit NWANaturals.com, and follow us on Twitter [@NWANaturals](https://twitter.com/NWANaturals) and Facebook.com/Naturals.

-Naturals Baseball-