

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 15, 2009

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ARKANSAS TECH WONDER BOYS TABBED SECOND IN PRESEASON GSC WEST DIVISION COACHES POLL; BRANDON FRIEDEL NAMED PRESEASON ALL-GSC WEST DIVISION SELECTION

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama – Arkansas Tech Men’s Basketball was picked to finish second in the Preseason Gulf South Conference West Division Coaches’ Poll released by the league office on Thursday.

Tech, who won its first-ever GSC title in men’s basketball last season and advanced to the regional semifinals of the NCAA Division II Tournament, received 44 points in the preseason poll as they received four votes to finish first, two votes to finish second and a vote to finish fourth. In addition, Tech received three votes to repeat as GSC Champions.

The Preseason Poll was voted on by the league’s head coaches and the head coaches could not vote for their own team.

Tech fourth-year head coach **Mark Downey** returns two starters, including senior guard **Renard Allen** (New Orleans, La.) and senior guard **Brandon Friedel** (Victoria, Texas), from last season’s 23-9 squad that finished 9-5 in the GSC West Division.

Delta State was tabbed as the team to beat in the West Division as the Statesmen earned 46 points, including four first place votes and also earned four votes to win the overall GSC title. Behind Delta State and Tech in the West Division poll was Harding (32 points) at No. 3, while Arkansas-Monticello and Christian Brothers, who are the defending South Regional champions, both earned 30 points to tie for fourth place. Southern Arkansas (22 points) was tabbed sixth and the Muleriders were followed by Henderson State (11 points) and Ouachita Baptist (9 points) in seventh and eighth place respectively.

Meanwhile in the East Division, Valdosta State was tabbed to repeat as GSC East Division champions as the Blazers earned five first place votes and 25 points and they also earned seven votes to win its first-ever GSC title. In addition to the Blazers in the East Division, North Alabama was picked second with 20 total points, including one first-place vote, while Alabama-Huntsville was picked with 17 total points. West Alabama was picked fourth with 14 points and the Tigers were followed by West Georgia at No. 5 with 9 points and West Florida (5 points) at No. 6.

Along with releasing its preseason poll, the league also announced its Preseason All-GSC Team in each division as Tech senior guard **Brandon Friedel** (Victoria, Texas) was named to the Preseason All-GSC West Division Team. Friedel, who was named to the GSC All-Tournament Team last season, is joined on the

Preseason West Division Team by Delta State senior guard Chad Atkins, Delta State senior guard Joe McCray, Harding junior forward Kevin Brown, Harding senior guard Trent Morgan and Southern Arkansas junior forward Justin Stuart.

In the East Division, Valdosta State preseason All-American forward Tyrone Curnell headlines the All-GSC Team. Curnell is joined by Alabama-Huntsville senior guard Cody Jones, Valdosta State senior forward Ricardo Lewis, West Alabama senior forward Jason Swanson and West Georgia senior forward John Pringle.

Tech senior guard **Marcus Pillow** (Russellville, Ark.), a transfer from Central Arkansas and junior guard **Willie Sanders** (Jacksonville, Fla.), a transfer from St. John's River [FL] Community College were named to the GSC West Division Top Newcomers List.

The Wonder Boys begin its 2009-10 season on Nov. 16 when they host Ozark Christian in a 7:30 p.m. game in Tucker Coliseum.

PRESEASON GSC MEN'S BASKETBALL POLL

West Division

| Team | Points |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Delta State (4) | 46 |
| 2. Arkansas Tech (3) | 44 |
| 3. Harding | 32 |
| 4. Arkansas-Monticello | 30 |
| 5. Christian Brothers | 30 |
| 6. Southern Arkansas | 22 |
| 7. Henderson State | 14 |
| 8. Ouachita Baptist | 9 |

() – indicates GSC Tournament champion votes

East Division

| Team | Points |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1. Valdosta State (7) | 25 |
| 2. North Alabama | 20 |
| 3. Alabama-Huntsville | 17 |
| 4. West Alabama | 14 |
| 5. West Georgia | 9 |
| 6. West Florida | 5 |

() – indicates GSC Tournament champion votes

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