

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 5, 2010

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ARKANSAS TECH MEN'S BASKETBALL CLOSES OUT NON-CONFERENCE PLAY WITH HOME WIN OVER CHAMPION BAPTIST, REMAINS UNDEFEATED ON SEASON

RUSSELLVILLE, Arkansas – The fifth-ranked Arkansas Tech Wonder Boys Basketball team returned home to Tucker Coliseum here Tuesday night and posted a 99-47 win over Champion Baptist to conclude the non-conference portion of its 2009-10 schedule.

With the win, Tech, who remained fifth in this week's latest NABC/Division II Coaches' Poll that was released several hours prior to tipoff, completes non-conference play with a 13-0 record. The 13-0 start is the best for the Wonder Boys in 57 years.

After a slow start to open the game, Tech, who trailed 6-0 in the first three minutes of the game, came back and was able to hold off the Tigers (7-14 on the season) and win its 12th straight home game dating to last season.

"We were a little sluggish at the beginning, especially our starters," Wonder Boys Head Coach **Mark Downey** said following the game.

The win was a milestone for Downey as he recorded his 60th career victory at Tech and is now four wins shy of becoming the fourth all-time winningest coach in school history. **E.O. Brown** is currently fourth as he recorded 63 wins from 1923-33.

In the first half, Tech trailed 6-0 and was down 9-2 when Downey subbed out all five starters and turned to his bench. Tech's bench responded as they used a 15-6 run capped by a lay-up from junior guard **Laithe Massey** (Heber Springs, Ark.) with 10:22 left in the half to take a 17-15 lead. After taking the lead, Tech then used a 13-1 run over a span of nearly four minutes to push out to a 30-16 lead. The lead eventually grew as much as 23 points on three occasions before CBC's Kyle Kinzer hit a shot with one second left in the first period to drop Tech's lead to 48-27 at the half.

Massey led the way for Tech as he scored a career-high 20 points, along with adding four assists and five rebounds, while senior guard **Renard Allen** (New Orleans, La.) added 12 points and eight boards in the win.

In the second half, Tech used its bench to put the game away as the Wonder Boys bench scored 31 of the team's 51 second-half points. For the game, Tech's bench outscored CBC, 58-14.

Tech's lead eventually reached 55 points thanks to a lay-up by sophomore guard **Matt Haney** (Dardanelle, Ark.) with 1:03 left in the game. Haney's basket made the score 99-44. The Tigers concluded the game's scoring with three free throws by Tommy McGonagle with 52 seconds remaining to make the final margin.

Joining Massey and Allen in double figures was junior forward **James Causey** (Tangipahoa, La.) and junior guard **Willie Sanders** (Jacksonville, Fla.) each scored 10 points in the win. In fact, 14 of the 15 players who played in the game scored at least one point.

On the night, Tech shot 48 percent from the field, but struggled from the 3-point line as they were just 1-for-21 (4.8 percent) from long distance. CBC finished the night shooting 30 percent from the field and just eight percent (1-for-12) from the 3-point arc.

"We need to regain our shooting touch from the 3-point line before beginning conference play this coming weekend," Downey said. It was the second straight game in which Tech struggled shooting the ball from long distance as they shot 31 percent from the 3-point arc in Monday's 65-54 win at Northeastern State.

Tech finished the game with a 58-36 edge on the glass and forced 23 turnovers that led to 35 points.

James Mathe led the way for the Tigers with 15 points, while B.J. Linkins posted a double-double of 11 points and 14 rebounds in the loss.

Tech will remain home to begin Gulf South Conference play on Saturday, Jan. 9, as the Wonder Boys will play host to Southern Arkansas in a 6 p.m. contest at Tucker Coliseum.

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