

# ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

***ATHLETICS***

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## **WONDER BOYS POST WIN OVER NORTH ALABAMA IN GSC TOURNAMENT QUARTERFINALS; ADVANCE TO SATURDAY'S SEMIFINALS**

**SOUTHAVEN, Mississippi** – Arkansas Tech Men's Basketball made a little more history here Friday afternoon by posting an 82-66 win over North Alabama in the quarterfinals of the 2009 Gulf South Conference Tournament at the DeSoto County Civic Center.

Friday's win advances Tech to its first-ever berth in the GSC Tournament semifinals in just its third-ever tournament appearance and also allowed the Wonder Boys to earn its first 20 win season since posting a 29-6 record during the 1994-95 season. The 20-win season was Tech's first at the NCAA Division II level.

"This was a big win for our basketball program," Wonder Boys Head Coach **Mark Downey** said. "We have never advanced this far in this tournament and we hadn't won 20 games in 14 years. We continue to do big things and this is amazing."

With the win, Tech improves to 20-8 overall on the season, while UNA falls to 18-10. The win also might have helped the Wonder Boys put themselves in position to earn a berth in its first NCAA Division II Tournament. Tech entered Friday's game ranked eighth in the latest NCAA Division II South Region Poll, while UNA is ranked ninth in that same poll.

Tech, who lost two regular season meetings with the Lions, made sure UNA wouldn't make it three straight victories thanks to 24-of-26 free throw shooting in the second half and a 27-13 edge on the glass after halftime. Tech finished the game with a 51-34 rebounding advantage.

"We gave an extraordinary effort on the glass, especially in the second half," Downey said. "Also, it was nice to see our players step to the line and hit their free throws."

The Wonder Boys, who led 37-32 at the half, used a 10-2 run over a span of four minutes to push out to a 51-41 lead following a dunk and a free throw by junior forward **Irvin Humphrey** (Boutte, La.). UNA, though, responded with a 10-4 run to pull within 55-51 with 8:55 remaining in the game.

That would be as close as the Lions would get, though, as Tech used a 12-5 run keyed by 8-of-9 free throws to extend its lead to 67-56 with 3:39 remaining. Jarelle Redden scored on back-to-back lay-ups to push UNA within 67-60 with 1:54 left, before Tech closed out with back-to-back lay-ups by senior guard **Chad Henderson** (Memphis, Tenn.) and hitting 11-of-12 free throws to seal Tech's win.

"Our free throw shooting was huge today," the third-year Tech coach said. "I challenged our guys at the half to get tough on the boards and they responded."

Henderson paced five Wonder Boys in double figures with 19 points, including going 10-for-10 at the foul line. In addition to Henderson, junior guard Renard Allen (New Orleans, La.) had 15 points, while senior forward **Troy Marcus** (Bronx, NY) added 13 points and seven rebounds.

"I thought Troy had a big game for us today," Downey said.

The other double figure scorers were senior center **Thiago Cordeiro** (Recife, Brazil) and junior guard **Brandon Friedel** (Victoria, Texas), who both tallied 12 points and 10 rebounds. The double-double was the first of Friedel's career and fourth for Cordeiro.

Kenny Johnson, Thomas Fraise and Phil Collins all led UNA with 12 points, while Redden tallied 10 points.

For the game, Tech shot 41 percent from the field, 33 percent from the 3-point line and 81 percent (29-for-36) from the foul line, while UNA shot 38 percent from the field, 25 percent from long distance and 63 percent (12-for-19) from the foul line. Tech committed 18 turnovers and held a 34-26 edge in points in the paint. UNA finished with 19 turnovers in the loss.

Tech will face Harding in Saturday's GSC Tournament semifinals at 5:30 p.m. Harding advanced to Saturday's semifinals with its 60-53 win over 12th-ranked Christian Brothers. Tech and Harding split their regular season meetings with the teams each winning on their own homecourts.

**-- Tech Athletics --**