

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

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ARKANSAS TECH'S NICK GRAZIANO NAMED AN NCAA DIVISION II AFCA COACHES' ALL-AMERICAN SELECTION

WACO, Texas – The postseason accolades continue to roll in for Arkansas Tech senior quarterback **Nick Graziano** as he joined some elite company on Tuesday as he became just the fifth Wonder Boy to ever be selected as an AFCA (American Football Coaches Association) Division II Coaches' All-American honoree.

Graziano, who is one of the top finalists for this season's Harlon Hill Trophy, which is given annually to the top football player in Division II, was one of four Gulf South Conference players chosen to the 25-player team that is selected exclusively by the 148-member NCAA Division II coaches.

The AFCA Division II All-America selection Committee was made up of three head coaches from each of the nine AFCA's districts, one of whom serves as a district chairman, along with another head coach who serves as the chairman of the selection committee. The coaches in each district are responsible for ranking the top players in their respective districts prior to a conference call between the district chairman and the committee chairman on which the team is chosen.

Graziano, who is the first offensive player chosen to the team from Tech, joins former Wonder Boy kicker Piotr Styczen (1995), defensive lineman Tommy Edwards (2003), cornerback Quincy Skinner (2006) and punter Michael Podobnik (2007) as AFCA Division II All-Americans. In addition, Graziano becomes the first GSC quarterback to be named an AFCA D-II All-American since Valdosta State's Dusty Bonner was honored in 2000.

"What a tremendous and truly deserving honor for Nick Graziano," Tech Head Football Coach and Athletic Director **Steve Mullins** said upon the announcement of this year's team. "He is very deserving of all of his postseason honors. He will leave Tech as one of the best quarterbacks to not only play here, but also in the state of Arkansas."

Graziano, a native of Moraga, Calif., and a transfer from the University of Nevada, earns this year's AFCA All-America honor after being named both the Gulf South Conference and the Daktronics Super Region Two Offensive Player of the Year. On the season, Graziano, who rewrote both the school's single-season passing and total offensive mark records, passed for a school and GSC-record 4,313 yards and accounted for a school and GSC record 4,768 yards of total offense. Graziano finished the season 333-for-538 passing and completed nearly 62 percent of his passes and is ranked second nationally in total offense (397.3 yards/game) and third nationally in both passing (359.4 yards/game) and points responsible for (22.5 points/game). He threw a school and Arkansas record 38 touchdown passes and only 12 interceptions in 12 games. Graziano had a hand in

45 of Tech's school record 66 touchdowns as he scored seven times on the ground, including an 82-yard touchdown run in Tech's 35-23 win over Delta State. Along with his passing, Graziano also gained 455 yards rushing on 76 carries, including rushing for a team-best 196 yards in that game against Delta State.

He was named a four-time GSC Offensive Player of the Week and was a three-time National co-Offensive Player of the Week by D2Football.com. Graziano became the first GSC player since Valdosta State's Lance Funderburk in 1996 to be named the league's Offensive Player of the Week four times in the same season. He has had Tech's only 400-yard passing games in school history, a feat he has accomplished six times on the year, including throwing for a single-game school record 465 yards in Tech's 41-13 home playoff win over UNC Pembroke. He has accounted for six of the Top 7 single-game total offensive marks in school history, including gaining a school record 546 total yards against Delta State, which is the sixth-best single-game mark in GSC history. Along with that, he had 58 plays of 20 yards or more this season, four of the Top 25 single-game total offensive yard performances in Division II this season and four of the Top 20 single-game passing yard performances this season in Division II.

In addition to Graziano, the other GSC players named to the AFCA D-II Coaches' All-America team were Southern Arkansas defensive lineman Cedric Thornton, Delta State linebacker Lardester Hicks-Green and Harding defensive back Josh Jones.

Listed below is the complete 25-player AFCA Division II All-American team. Wayne State running back Joique Bell, who is another of the three finalists for the Harlon Hill Trophy, was named an AFCA All-American in 2006.

OFFENSE

	Pos.	Yr.	School (Hometown)
Frederick Bruno	WR	Jr.	Wayne State [NE] (Miami, Fla.)
Mike Harris	WR	Sr.	Shippensburg (East Earl, Pa.)
Nick McDonald	OL	Sr.	Grand Valley St. (Sterling Heights, Mich.)
Andy Schoonover	OL	Sr.	Minn. St.-Mankato (Boyceville, Wis.)
Jack Hiatt	OL	Sr.	Nebraska-Kearney (Arvada, Colo.)
Jared Veldheer	OL	Sr.	Hillsdale (Grand Rapids, Mich.)
Tony Washington	OL	Sr.	Abilene Christian (New Orleans, La.)
Nick Graziano	QB	Sr.	Arkansas Tech (Moraga, Calif.)
Joique Bell	RB	Sr.	Wayne St. (Benton Harbor, Mich.)
Isaac Odim	RB	Jr.	Minnesota-Duluth (Rochester, Mich.)
Jonas Randolph	RB	So.	Mars Hill (Daleville, Ala.)

DEFENSE

Xavier Brown	DL	Jr.	C.W. Post (Bay Shore, N.Y.)
Marc Schiechl	DL	Jr.	Colorado Mines (Lakewood, Colo.)
Eugene Sims	DL	Sr.	West Texas A&M (Mt. Olive, Miss.)
Cedric Thornton	DL	Jr.	Southern Arkansas (Star City, Ark.)
L. Hicks-Green	LB	Sr.	Delta State (Chicago, Ill.)
John Jacobs	LB	Sr.	Saginaw Valley St. (Prudenville, Mich.)
Zach Watkins	LB	Sr.	Washburn (Independence, Mo.)
Buddy Wood	LB	Sr.	Central Wash. (Chattaroy, Wash.)
Myles Burnsidés	DB	Sr.	NW Missouri State (Maryville, Mo.)

Josh Jones	DB	Sr.	Harding (Carson, Calif.)
Quintez Smith	DB	Sr.	Shaw (Dublin, Ga.)

SPECIALISTS

Kevin Berg	P	Jr.	Chardon State (Longmont, Colo.)
Greg Zuerlein	K	Jr.	Nebraska-Omaha (Lincoln, Neb.)
Akwasi Owusu-Ansah	AP	Sr.	Indiana [PA] (Columbus, Ohio)

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