

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

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WONDER BOYS CONCLUDE SPRING FOOTBALL DRILLS WITH NINTH ANNUAL SENIOR BOWL

RUSSELLVILLE, Arkansas – Arkansas Tech Football concluded its slate of 15 spring practices here Tuesday night with its ninth annual Senior Bowl at Buerkle Field.

Tuesday's Senior Bowl featured four eight minute quarters and the teams were split up by the seniors who drafted the players and coaches for the game.

"Tonight's game was a lot more competitive as the teams were more equal than they were in Saturday's Green and Gold Game," Tech Head Football Coach **Steve Mullins** said. "I was really pleased with the intensity and attitude of the players tonight."

The Green team won this year's Senior Bowl 9-8 thanks to a 10-yard touchdown pass from redshirt freshman **C.J. Hunter** (West Helena, Ark.) to junior **Joe Stueart** (Prescott, Ark.) in the fourth quarter and then preserved the win when senior linebacker **Nolan Johnson** (San Jose, Calif.) picked off a pass from redshirt freshman **Bubba Noakes** (Ola, Ark.) and returned it 26 yards.

One area Mullins was happier with on Tuesday was his team's defense as they didn't allow a lot of points and even scored two points on a safety in the first quarter by the Green team.

"Our defense made some improvement tonight, but again, a lot of that was due to how the teams were divided up," Mullins said. "There were a lot of folks out there tonight getting after it and that was pleasing."

In Saturday's Green and Gold Spring Game, the teams were split into No. 1s (Green) against the rest of the team (White).

The Green team began the scoring in the first quarter on a safety by sophomore defensive end **R.C. Wallace** (Beebe, Ark.) as he tackled Noakes in the end zone on the White team's third possession of the game. That would be the only scoring in the first half.

In the third quarter, the White team took the lead thanks to a 50-yard pass from Noakes to junior receiver **Robert Woods** (Dardanelle, Ark.) and then the White team added a two-point conversion on sophomore **Antonio McCoy's** (Batesville, Ark.) run. The 50-yard pass was the longest play of the scrimmage for either team. Woods finished the night with three catches for 96 yards.

Noakes finished the scrimmage 9-for-16 passing for 141 yards and one touchdown and an interception. In addition to passing for 141 yards, Noakes carried the ball 12 times for 128 yards, including rushing for 67 yards on the White team's

final two possessions. In Saturday's Green and Gold Game, Noakes rushed 10 times for 72 yards and passed for 51 yards.

"It's obvious that Bubba is tremendous with his feet," Mullins added.

When asked whether Noakes will remain at quarterback in the fall, Mullins said that Noakes will move back to wide receiver.

"Noakes doesn't want to play quarterback," the 10th-year Tech coach said. "He has tremendous running skills and will be utilized a lot ways in our new offense, and will also play on all special teams."

During the spring, Tech practiced without its top two quarterbacks as redshirt sophomore **Justin Ray** (Benton, Ark.) and sophomore Arkansas transfer **Cole Barthel** (Decatur, Ala.) missed almost all of spring ball due to injuries. Ray injured his ankle playing intramural basketball and never fully practiced, while Barthel hurt his knee in the team's third practice of the spring and is questionable for the fall.

"I thought spring practice went about as good as it could with the absence of our top two quarterbacks and also the introduction of a new offensive and defensive scheme," said Mullins. "Our players showed a lot of character this spring and did the best they could."

On the night, the White team outgained the Green team, 268 yards to 167 yards. The Green team rushed for 69 yards on 28 carries and had 98 yards passing, while the White team rushed 21 times for 127 yards and threw for 141 yards.

Redshirt sophomore **Tracey Stiger** (Russellville, Ark.) led the Green team offensively with 14 carries for 46 yards and caught three passes for 16 yards, while Hunter gained 15 yards on 12 carries and was 8-for-17 through the air for 98 yards and a touchdown pass.

The Wonder Boys will open its 93rd season on football on Thursday, Aug. 31 when they host Northeastern [OK] State. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m. at Russellville High School's Cyclone Stadium. Tech is playing its five home games this upcoming season at Cyclone Stadium due to the renovation work being done on Buerkle Field as part of the school's \$4-million 'Return to Glory' capital campaign.

2006 Arkansas Tech Senior Bowl

Green 2 0 0 7 - 9

White 0 0 8 0 - 8

Total Offense

Green -

Rushing - 28-69

Passing - 8-98

Total - 36-167

White -

Rushing - 21-127

Passing - 9-141

Total - 30-268

Scoring Summary

First Quarter

Green - R.C. Wallace tackled Bubba Noakes in end zone (Team Safety)

Third Quarter

White - Robert Woods 50-yard pass from Bubba Noakes (Antonio McCoy rush)

Fourth Quarter

Green - Joe Stueart 10-yard pass from C.J. Hunter (Travis Cockerham kick)

Individual Statistics

RUSHING- Green - Tracey Stiger 14-46; C.J. Hunter 12-15; Earnie Childress 1-3; Gabe Albeik 1-5. White - Bubba Noakes 12-128; R.J. Vanhook 4-0; Antonio McCoy 2-1; Tim Childress 3-(-2).

PASSING - Green - C.J. Hunter 8-17-0-1 98; Gabe Albeik 0-2-0-0 0. White - Bubba Noakes 9-16-1-1 141.

RECEIVING - Green - Tracey Stiger 3-16; Joe Stueart 2-35; Luther Stueart 1-14; Rolando Wright 1-24; Rickey Green 1-13. White - Robert Woods 3-96; Patrick Smith 3-36; Chris Gunter 2-6; Antonio McCoy 1-3.

INTERCEPTION - Green - Nolan Johnson 1-26.

FUMBLE RETURNS - Green - Eric Hollin 1-0.

ATT. - 200. **TIME** - 1:30.

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