

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

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GOLDEN SUNS CONCLUDE HOME PORTION OF ITS SCHEDULE WITH DOUBLEHEADER SWEEP OF CENTRAL BAPTIST ON SENIOR DAY

RUSSELLVILLE, Arkansas – Arkansas Tech Golden Suns Softball closed out the home portion of its 2009 schedule here Thursday afternoon by sweeping a non-conference doubleheader from Central Baptist on Senior Day at the Chartwells Women's Sports Complex.

In between the doubleheader, the Golden Suns honored its three-member senior class that has combined to win 78 game over the past two seasons and also win the school's first-ever Gulf South Conference West Division in 2008. This year's seniors are centerfielder **Krista Cifuentes** (Clinton, Ark.), rightfielder **Sarah Pratt** (Garland, Texas) and leftfielder **Kacie Visina** (Rowlett, Texas).

With the two wins, Tech improves to 37-19 overall on the season and closed the year with a 20-3 mark at home. Since opening play in the Chartwells Complex last season, Tech has compiled a 38-5 record, including ending this year's home schedule by winning its last 13 games.

Tech opened the doubleheader by posting a 5-0 victory behind a no-hitter from junior pitcher **Casey Hammons** (Carthage, Texas) and the posting a 1-0 win in the nightcap behind the fifth shutout of the season from freshman hurler **Morgan Rodgers** (Mansfield, Texas).

Hammons' no-hitter is the second of her career and the eighth in Tech history. Earlier this season, Hammons, who has been named the GSC West Division Pitcher of the Week three times this season, threw not only a no-hitter, but a perfect game in Tech's 10-0 home win over Arkansas-Pine Bluff.

In the opener, Hammons got all the run support she needed in the fourth inning thanks to a 2-run triple by freshman shortstop **Stephanie Lasley** (Greenbrier, Ark.). Lasley's triple plated Hammons, who had reached on a one-out single and junior third baseman **Taylor Gates** (Paris, Texas), who reached base after getting hit by a Claire Collom pitch.

Tech extended its lead to 4-0 in the fifth inning on an RBI single by sophomore first baseman **Tiphani Moon** (Euless, Texas) and an RBI double by junior catcher **Roxie Palacios** (Crosby, Texas). With her RBI, Moon moved into a tie with former Golden Sun **Sara Goodman** (2003-06) for the career mark in RBIs with 75.

The lead grew to 5-0 in the sixth thanks to an RBI single by Pratt, which plated Visina, who had reached base on a one-out single. Following her single, she then stole second and moved to third on a groundout by Cifuentes before scoring.

Hammons improved to 17-6 on the season with the complete-game no-hitter. For the game, Hammons walked three and struck out 10.

Collom took the loss for CBC (33-12 on the season) as she tossed six innings and allowed nine hits and five runs, while walking one and striking out three.

Pratt led the way offensively as she was 3-for-4 at the plate with a run scored and an RBI.

Meanwhile, in the nightcap, Tech used a two singles, a stolen base and an RBI fielder's choice by sophomore second baseman **Shanda Jameson** (Mansfield, Texas) to plate the only run of the game in the third inning. In the third, Rodgers led off with single and then junior **Lauren Jones** (Dardanelle, Ark.), who was pinch running for Rodgers, stole second and then moved to third on a single by Cifuentes. After a bunt single by Pratt loaded the bases, Jameson delivered her fielder's choice that plated Jones.

Pratt's single in the third inning was her 202nd career base hit, which tied her for first on the school's career hit chart with former Golden Sun **Molly Schweigert** (2004-08).

The one run would be enough as Rodgers, the reigning GSC West Division Pitcher of the Week, hung on to collect her 12th complete game and fifth shutout of the season. For the game, Rodgers (15-10) scattered six hits, while walking none and striking out one.

Rodgers got into some trouble in the seventh as she allowed a lead-off single to Tia Houston, who moved to second on a sacrifice bunt by Carly Powers. At that point, Houston was lifted for pinch runner Krishauna Kindell, who moved to third base on a groundout by Jessica McDaniel, before Rodgers ended the threat and the game by forcing Taylor Pryor to pop out to Cifuentes.

Schylar Drake took the loss for the Mustangs as she tossed six innings and allowed seven hits and one earned run, while walking none and striking out one.

Gates and Cifuentes each picked up two hits apiece in the win. Hailey King and Houston each had two hits in the loss for CBC.

The Golden Suns will close out the regular season this coming weekend when they travel to Monticello, Ark., to face Arkansas-Monticello in a four-game GSC series. The series will begin with a doubleheader beginning at 1 p.m. on Saturday and will conclude with a doubleheader on Sunday, which will also begin at 1 p.m. The series will determine which team will win the GSC West Division title and earn the No. 1 seed in next weekend's GSC Tournament in Southaven, Miss. Tech enters the weekend with a .667 winning percentage (16-8 record) in league play, while UAM has a .615 winning percentage (16-10 record) in the league. The team with the higher winning percentage at the end of the regular season will earn the GSC West Division title.

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