

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

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Contact: Joseph Raasch, GA SID (479) 968-0645

ARKANSAS TECH VOLLEYBALL LOSES IN THREE-SETS TO HARDING ON "PINK OUT" NIGHT, RAISIES OVER \$2,000 SUSAN G. KOMAN FOUNDATION

RUSSELLVILLE, Arkansas – Arkansas Tech Volleyball saw its chances to repeat Gulf South Conference West Division title come to an end here Thursday evening as the Golden Suns fell in three hard-fought sets to Harding (26-24, 25-17, 26-24) in front of 612 pink clad fans on "Pink Out" Night at Tucker Coliseum.

Despite the three-set loss, the Golden Suns (19-11 overall, 6-3 GSC) made the Lady Bison work to earn the victory and improve to 22-5 overall and 7-1 in the West Division standings.

Tuesday's match was "Pink Out" Night in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month (October) as the Golden Suns sported pink jerseys, which were donated by IBEW Local 647 of Arkansas Nuclear One. The jerseys were auctioned off during the match to raise money for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. In addition to auctioning off the pink jerseys, Tech's SAAC (Student-Athlete Advisory Committee) held a silent auction of Tech athletic items. The total amount raised from the pink jerseys and other auction items was approximately \$2,100, according to Tech Head Volleyball Coach **Kristy Bayer**.

"We raised almost \$2,100 and we couldn't have done it without the help of IBEW Local 647 out at Arkansas Nuclear One," Bayer said. "I would also like to thank all the Tech coaches for donating items for the silent auction and also for the fans showing up wearing pink shirts."

As for the match, Tech could not get any kills and errors seemed to stop the Golden Suns from getting anything going as they hit .136 for the match, including hitting .091 in the third and final set.

Despite the lack of offense, Tech's defense kept the match close as they recorded 11 total blocks, 46 digs and limited Harding to a .212 hitting percentage, including holding the Lady Bison to an .095 percentage in the final set.

Tech did have its chances to win in the first and third set by forcing the match to go a little bit longer, but Harding's experienced seniors made sure that Lady Bison didn't let Tech back in.

Leading the way for was junior middle blocker **Sarah Von Lienen** (Lakeland, Tenn.), who had 13 kills and four total blocks on the night, while freshman middle blocker **Brittany Ryan** (Mena, Ark.) had seven total blocks on the night, five of which were assisted. Ryan also added five kills in the loss.

Also on the night, sophomore libero **Brennae Benda** (Woodstock, Ill.) had 12 digs for the match. Benda is currently fourth all-time on school's career chart in

digs with 1,104 digs and is tied for sixth in single-season matches with double-figure digs with 21.

Harding was paced by the play of its two seniors, Manuela Nesheva and Sarah Phipps. Nesheva recorded 17 kills and 11 digs, while Phipps added 12 kills and nine digs in the win. Emily Tate had 16 digs and Alex Smith had nine kills and hit .333 for the Lady Bison.

Tech will return to action on Saturday, Oct. 24, when the Golden Suns travel to Little Rock to play a tri-match at Philander Smith College. Tech will open the tri-match at 3 p.m. against Philander Smith, before facing off against LeMoyne-Owen at 5 p.m. The Golden Suns will then close out the non-conference portion of its schedule on Tuesday, Nov. 27 with a 7 p.m. match at Bacone College in Muskogee, Okla.

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