

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

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VOLLEYBALL WINS FIVE SET THRILLER AT HENDERSON STATE, EARNS THIRD SEED FROM WEST DIVISION IN GSC TOURNAMENT

ARAKDELPHIA, Arkansas – In a battle for third in the GSC West Division standings, both Arkansas Tech and Henderson State would not let each other win third place without each other having a say as the Golden Suns picked up a five-set win over the Lady Reddies (22-25, 25-20, 15-25, 25-21, 15-10) in both teams regular season finale at the Duke Wells Center in Gulf South Conference volleyball action.

With the win, Tech improved to 24-12 overall and 8-4 in the GSC West Division, while HSU fell to 14-16 overall and 7-5 in the West Division.

In Thursday's first set, Henderson State made sure that they put on pressure on the Golden Suns. Tech responded first by jumping out to a 12-6 lead, but HSU started its charge back after a kill by Tatiana Kuhn. The Lady Reddies went on an 8-2 run to tie the set and stretched its lead out to 22-19 following a service ace by Tagata Fo'a. HSU eventually picked up the win 25-22 as they hit .250 and held the Golden Suns to a .200 hitting percentage.

The second set featured a match-high seven ties, but only one lead change as Tech's defense held HSU to an .083 hitting percentage. While its defense held the Lady Reddies in check, Tech's offense did just enough as they hit .143. Tech broke up a 14-14 tie thanks to a kill by sophomore outside hitter **Laura Farney** (Morton, Ill.). Tech pushed its lead to 18-15 and lead by us much as six, before HSU came back to pull within 23-20. Tech would win the set 25-20 thanks to an attack error by Kuhn and a service ace from sophomore libero **Brennae Benda** (Woodstock, Ill).

In the third set, Tech trailed 4-0 early on, but used a 9-1 run to take a 9-6 lead. Following Tech's lead, HSU scored 10 of the next 13 points to pull out to a 16-12 lead. After a kill by sophomore outside hitter **Kelly O'Malley** (Billings, Mont.) dropped HSU's lead to 16-13, the Lady Reddies closed out the set outscoring Tech, 9-2 to post the win and take a 2-1 lead in the match. HSU hit .370 in the set, while Tech hit .074.

Tech used the play of junior middle blocker **Sarah Von Lienen** (Lakeland, Tenn.) to post a 25-21 win in the fourth set to tie the match and force a fifth and deciding set. In the set, Von Lienen paced Tech with 11 of her match-high 21 kills. In addition to Von Lienen's play, Tech's defense held HSU to a .100 hitting percentage and forced six Lady Reddie attack errors.

The fifth and deciding set was a nail-biter as neither team took control of the set until Tech forced a Robin Law attack error with the set tied at 5-all. Law's error spearheaded Tech as they used a 5-0 run to push out to a 10-5 edge. Following

Tech's run, HSU pulled within 11-8 following a block by Shawna Watkins, before the Golden Suns held on to close out the set and the match by scoring four of the final six points to post the win. Tech ended the game with a kill by Von Lienen.

In addition to Von Lienen's 21 kills, sophomore outside hitter **Marcela Mascarenhas** (Sao Paulo, Brazil) had 15 kills and added a match-high 22 digs in the win, while Benda had 19 digs and Farney had 13 digs and eight kills for the Golden Suns.

Kuhn led HSU with 20 kills and nine digs, while Law added 17 kills and Bethany Wright had 20 digs in the loss.

The Golden Suns will return to action next Friday, Nov. 13, when they compete in the 2009 GSC Tournament at Rhodes Fieldhouse in Searcy, Ark. Tech will open the first round of the tournament against the No. 2 seed out of the East Division at 5 p.m.

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