

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

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ARKANSAS TECH MEN'S BASKETBALL LISTED AS ONE OF THE POSSIBLE BREAKTHROUGH TEAMS IN *THE SPORTING NEWS* 2009-10 NCAA DIVISION II PREVIEW

RUSSELLVILLE, Arkansas – With the start of practice a little less than 10 days away, Arkansas Tech Men's Basketball has been named a possible breakthrough team in the NCAA Division II for the 2009-10 season by *The Sporting News* in its 2009-10 College Basketball Preview Magazine that hit newsstands on Monday.

Tech, who finished last season with a 23-9 record and won the program's first-ever Gulf South Conference title and advanced to the semifinals of the NCAA Division II South Regional, is one of three GSC schools mentioned in its Division II preview. Valdosta State, the team that Tech defeated in the finals of last season's GSC Tournament, is ranked fourth in the magazine's Preseason Division II Top 10 Poll, while Tech and Christian Brothers, who advanced to the NCAA Division II Elite Eight last year after winning the South Regional, are listed as possible breakthrough teams.

Fourth-year Tech head coach **Mark Downey** welcomes back two starters and eight lettermen from last season's squad, including senior guards **Renard Allen** (New Orleans, La.) and **Brandon Friedel** (Victoria, Texas). In addition, Downey brought in 10 newcomers, including senior guard **Marcus Pillow** (Russellville, Ark.), a transfer from Central Arkansas, junior guard **Jeremy Dunbar** (Niceville, Fla.), a transfer from Southeastern Louisiana and junior guard **Willie Sanders** (Jacksonville, Ark.), a transfer from St. John's River [FL] Community College.

Bellarmine headlines the magazine's Preseason Division II Top 10 poll and they are followed by BYU-Hawai'i at No. 2 and Central Missouri at No. 3. Following Valdosta State in the poll is Bentley at No. 5, Indiana [PA] at No. 6 and Grand Valley State at No. 7. The final three teams in the Top 10 are Humboldt State at No. 8, Cal Poly Pomona, the defending NCAA Division II national runners-up, at No. 9 and St. Cloud State is ranked 10th.

Along with announcing its Preseason Top 10 Poll and possible breakthrough teams, the *Sporting News* also released its Preseason Division II All-America team.

The Preseason Division II All-America Team featured only one player from the GSC as Valdosta State's Tyrone Curnell was named a First-Team All-America selection.

Tech will begin practice for the 2009-10 season on Oct. 15 and will open its regular season on Monday, Nov. 16, when they host Ozark Christian in a 7:30 p.m. game at Tucker Coliseum.

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