

# ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

***ATHLETICS***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 28, 2009**

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## **GOLDEN SUNS CLOSE REGULAR SEASON WITH DISAPPOINTING LOSS AT CHRISTIAN BROTHERS; EARNS THIRD SEED FROM WEST DIVISION IN GSC TOURNAMENT**

**MEMPHIS, Tennessee** – Arkansas Tech Women’s Basketball closed out its 2008-09 regular season here Saturday by suffering a disappointing 67-61 loss to Christian Brothers in Gulf South Conference action at Canale Arena.

With the loss and Arkansas-Monticello’s overtime win Saturday over Southern Arkansas, the Golden Suns earn the No. 3 seed from the West Division in next week’s GSC Tournament at the DeSoto County Civic Center in Southaven, Miss. Tech will open the tournament on Thursday, March 5 against Valdosta State, the No. 2 seed from the East Division, in the second of four quarterfinal match-ups at 2:45 p.m.

“It was a very disappointing loss today for our team,” Golden Suns Head Coach **Dave Wilbers** said. “We played their (CBU’s) tempo. They hit some shots and we didn’t defend in the second half.”

Tech, who led 27-24 at the half, struggled defensively in the second half as the Lady Buccaneers, who finished its season with an 11-16 record and a 4-10 GSC mark, shot 54 percent from the field and was 13-for-16 from the foul line in earning its third-ever win over the Golden Suns. Tech finished the regular season with a 19-7 overall record and earned a 9-5 mark in the GSC.

“We’ve been battling sickness and fatigue all week, but give CBU credit, they played well today,” the second-year Tech coach said. “We need to regroup and get ready for Thursday and the GSC Tournament.”

Tech played Saturday’s regular season finale without junior point guard **Ashley Grappe** (Benton, Ark.) for the second straight game due to illness. In addition to Grappe, junior forward **Heissy Robledo** (Guaviare, Colombia) returned to action against CBU after sitting out the UAM game on Thursday.

CBU opened the second half on a 13-8 run to push out to a 37-35 lead just six minutes out of the locker room. Tech, though, used a 6-2 run to take a 41-39 lead with 12:36 left in game following a lay-up by senior guard **Nikki Earles** (Huntsville, Ark.). The Lady Bucs, though, responded with an 8-2 run to retake the lead at 47-43 with 9:41 remaining.

Tech came right back with an 8-2 run to take a 51-49 lead with 7:32 left following a lay-up by senior All-American forward **Amanda Grappe** (Benton, Ark.). A 7-0 run by the Lady Bucs pushed CBU in front 56-51 with 5:49 remaining. The Golden Suns would make one more comeback as they used a 6-0 run to take its final lead of the game at 57-56 after a three-point play by Robledo with 4:31 left in the contest.

The Lady Bucs closed the game outscoring Tech, 11-4, including hitting 5-of-6 free throws in the final minute to seal the win and close the season with three consecutive victories.

In the first half, Tech led 12-6 just a little over five minutes into the game, before CBU used a 10-4 run to tie the game at 16 following a basket by Sheena DeBose with 7:20 left in the half. After DeBose's basket, Tech retook the lead 17 seconds later on a three-pointer by senior guard **Rachel Brazell** (Huntsville, Ark.). Tech went into halftime with a 27-24 lead.

Grappe led Tech with 16 points and nine rebounds, but struggled from the field as she shot 8-for-19 and was 0-for-3 at the free throw line. In addition to Grappe's 19 points, Brazell tallied 12 points and Earles added 11 in the loss, including scoring nine of those points in the first half.

CBU was paced offensively by Tanaeya Worden's 17 points, while DeBose added 13 points. Kat Butler added 10 points in her final college game and Tameka Wooten scored 11 points.

For the game, Tech shot 43 percent from the field, but was 5-for-15 (33 percent) from the 3-point line, while CBU shot 44 percent from the floor and was 6-for-20 (30 percent) from long distance. In addition, CBU held a 33-30 edge on the glass and forced Tech into 17 turnovers that led to 13 points. The Lady Bucs committed 15 turnovers and blocked five shots.

**-- Tech Athletics --**