

# ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

***ATHLETICS***

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## **GOLDEN SUNS FIVE-GAME HOME WINNING STREAK SNAPPED WITH LOSS TO DELTA STATE**

**RUSSELLVILLE, Arkansas** – Arkansas Tech Women’s Basketball saw its five-game homecourt winning streak come to a halt here Saturday as the Golden Suns fell 73-60 in Gulf South Conference action in front of a season-high 1,102 fans at Tucker Coliseum.

Prior to Saturday’s loss to DSU, Tech hadn’t lost at home since falling 79-65 to Incarnate Word on Dec. 21. In addition, it was only Tech’s second home loss of the season at Tucker Coliseum.

With the loss, Tech falls to 18-6 overall and 8-4 in the GSC West Division, while DSU improved to 21-6 and 11-1 in the GSC. The victory also earned the Lady Statesmen its fourth consecutive GSC West Division title and the No. 1 seed at the GSC Tournament on March 4-8 in Southaven, Miss.

In Saturday’s game, Tech, who trailed 27-21 at the half, couldn’t overcome a 27-11 run by the Lady Statesmen over a span of nearly 10 minutes in the second half to fall to the DSU for the 12th consecutive time and the second time this season. DSU’s run pushed its lead to 54-34 with 9:34 left in the game.

“Our defense let us down early in the second half. We’ve come out of halftime really well at home this season, but tonight we weren’t there defensively,” Golden Suns Head Coach **Dave Wilbers** said. “You can’t give a good team like Delta State those kinds of opportunities.”

Following DSU’s run, Tech used a 10-2 run over the span of nearly five minutes to pull within 56-44 following two free throws by senior All-American forward **Amanda Grappe** (Benton, Ark.). The Lady Statesmen, though, used a quick 4-0 run to extend its lead back to 16 at 60-44 with 5:16 left in the game.

From that point, Tech would get no closer the 13 points the rest of the game as the Lady Statesmen closed the game hitting 12 of its final 13 free throw attempts to seal the win.

“We didn’t hit a lot of shots tonight, especially in the second half,” the second-year Tech coach said. “They (DSU) have a lot of size and a lot of depth and they made it tough on us, but they’ve made it tough on almost everyone all season.”

Grappe led the way with a game-high 22 points and added nine rebounds. Grappe scored 16 of her points in the second half, including going 10-for-10 from the foul line after halftime. She finished the night 12-for-13 from the free throw line and in the process became the school’s all-time leader in made free throws with 470. She entered the game tied with **Sherry Raney-White** for first in career free throws made.

In addition to Grappe, junior guard **Brittany Gottsponer** (Morrilton, Ark.) added nine points, while freshman center **Taise Da Silva** (Americana, Brazil) and

junior forward **Heissy Robledo** (Guaviare, Colombia) each scored eight points in the loss.

DSU was paced offensively by 19 points and nine rebounds from LaMaesha McAdory, while Bug Cooper added a double-double with 13 points and 14 assists. Kristen McBride and Moe Bell each scored 11 points in the win.

In the first half, Tech scored the game's first basket on a lay-up by Grappe just 33 seconds into the game. Following Grappe's lay-up, DSU used a 10-2 run to push in front 10-4.

The Golden Suns, though, responded with a 10-6 run to pull within 16-14 with 8:25 left in the half following a fast break lay-up by Grappe. The Lady Statesmen would close out the half outscoring Tech, 11-7 to go into halftime with its six-point lead.

For the game, Tech shot 41 percent from the field, but was just 1-for-8 (13 percent) from the 3-point line and finished shooting 74 percent (25-for-34) at the foul line. DSU shot 41 percent from the field, 31 percent from long distance and was 24-for-29 (83 percent) from the foul line. The Lady Statesmen also held a 38-28 edge on the glass and forced Tech into 16 turnovers that led to 17 points. DSU had 15 turnovers that led to 11 Tech points.

The Golden Suns will return to action next Thursday when they close out the home portion of its schedule against Arkansas-Monticello (17-6, 9-3 GSC) at 5:30 p.m. in Tucker Coliseum. The game will mark the final home contest for Tech's three seniors – Grappe, guard **Nikki Earles** (Huntsville, Ark.) and guard **Rachel Brazell** (Mansfield, Texas).

"There is still a lot of season left. We have two big games left with UAM and Christian Brothers next week," Wilbers said. "We're going get to back to work and put ourselves in the best possible position to win on Thursday."

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