

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

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ARKANSAS TECH NAMES MVPS FROM SATURDAY'S SENIOR DAY VICTORY OVER DELTA STATE

RUSSELLVILLE, Arkansas – The Arkansas Tech football coaching staff has selected its Most Valuable Players from its 35-23 Senior Day home win Saturday evening over Delta State.

The Offensive MVP honor was awarded to senior quarterback **Nick Graziano** (Moraga, Calif.) for the second consecutive week and the third time this season. Graziano was also named the Offensive MVP following both the Arkansas-Monticello and Henderson State games. Graziano earns the Offensive MVP honor after grading out at 84 percent in the win over the Statesmen, according to Tech Head Football Coach and Athletic Director **Steve Mullins**. Against the Statesmen, Graziano, the two-time GSC and National Offensive Player of the Week, accounted for 546 total yards of offense, including rushing for a Tech season-best 196 yards on 15 carries, including scoring on an 82-yard run in the fourth quarter to give Tech a 35-17 edge, in helping the Wonder Boys pick up its first win over DSU since 2004 and also win its sixth straight home contest dating to last season's finale against Harding. Along with his rushing yards, Graziano was 27-for-54 passing for 350 yards and had one interception and two touchdowns. The 545 total yards of offense is the sixth-best mark ever in GSC history. In addition, Graziano also became Tech's single-season leader in passing yards (3,013 yards), total offense (3,402 yards) and touchdown passes (27). All three of those school marks were formally held by former Wonder Boy **Jason Campbell** in 2004 as he passed for 2,922 yards, gained 2,924 yards of total offense and threw 26 touchdown passes. Along with setting those records, Graziano also is the school's single-season leader in pass completions as he has completed 225 passes this season, which is one better than Harlon Hill Trophy candidate **Cole Barthel** (224) had last season.

On defense, the coaches awarded MVP honors to junior linebacker **Jamal Johnson** (New Orleans, La.). Johnson earns his first MVP honor this season after grading out at 87 percent in the win over the Statesmen. Against Delta State, Johnson had three total tackles, a tackle for loss, one sack, four quarterback pressures and forced a fumble in the Wonder Boys 35-23 win.

The coaches awarded Special Teams MVP honors to senior defensive lineman **Norman Bell** (Minneapolis, Minn.). Mullins said that Bell earns this week's Special Teams honor thanks to blocking a 26-yard field goal attempt by DSU's Matt Dean late in the first quarter to keep Tech's lead at 7-0 heading into the second quarter.

Tech (7-2 overall, 5-2 GSC) will return to action next Saturday, Nov. 7, when they conclude the 2009 regular season at Harding (5-5 overall, 3-4 GSC). Kickoff for Saturday's regular season finale is set for 2 p.m. at First Security Stadium in

Searcy, Ark. Tech enters the final week of the regular season seeking to remain in the hunt to earn a berth in this year's NCAA D-II Playoffs as the Wonder Boys were ranked eighth in last week's latest Super Regional Two Poll.

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