

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

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JEREMY ASHCRAFT NAMED OFFENSIVE LINEMAN OF THE GAME AT FRIDAY'S 2009 VALERO CACTUS BOWL

KINGSVILLE, Texas – Arkansas Tech's **Jeremy Ashcraft** continued his strong postseason play here Friday as he was named the Offensive Lineman of the Game at Friday's 2009 Valero Cactus Bowl played in front of 6,000 fans at Javelina Stadium on the campus of Texas A&M University-Kingsville.

Ashcraft, who also played in late November at the East Coast Bowl in Petersburg, Va., was a starting offensive tackle for the East squad in Friday's game. East kicker Tom Schneider, who played at North Alabama, missed a potential game-winning 34-yard field with three seconds left in the game to help the West squad win this year's game, 28-27. The win by the West squad snapped a three-game losing streak.

Despite the loss, the East squad's offense gained a game-high 420 yards of offense, including having its two quarterbacks combine to go 21-for-41 passing for 257 yards, while its running backs carried the ball 41 times for 163 yards on the night.

West quarterback Keith Null, who played at West Texas A&M, was named the game's Offensive MVP as he completed a Cactus Bowl record 19 passes on 27 attempts for 240 yards. The Defensive MVP went to West outside linebacker Jeff Souder, who played at Nebraska-Omaha, as he had seven tackles and a pass break-up in the West victory.

Ashcraft helped several members of the East offense set new Cactus Bowl records as former Henderson State receiver Garret Manning caught a record-tying seven passes for 122 yards, while former Mars Hill running back George Washington set a new record with his 51-yard run in the fourth quarter. Washington's run set up Schneider's fourth made field goal of the game to give the East a 25-21 lead with 10:42 left in the contest.

This past season, **Ashcraft**, a senior from Marshall, Texas, started all 10 games for the Wonder Boys in 2008 at right tackle and averaged a grade of 81 percent on the season. In addition, he led the Wonder Boys with 78 knockdown blocks and had 13 pancake blocks and helped Tech's offensive line allow just eight sacks in 10 games, which was tied for the fourth-best total in all of Division II football. He was also named a First-Team All-GSC selection and a Second-Team Daktronics All-South Region honoree.

The Valero Cactus Bowl is an all-star game featuring NCAA Division II senior football players and the proceeds from the game will once again go to the Shiners Hospital for Children. This year's Cactus Bowl featured 19 All-Americans and was headlined by six of the 24 Harlon Hill candidates from this past season – Minnesota-

Duluth quarterback Ted Schlafke, Nebraska-Omaha running back Brian McNeill, West Texas A&M receiver Charley Martin, Tusculum quarterback Cory Russell, California [PA] quarterback Kevin McCabe and West Chester receiver Mike Washington. Russell, McCabe and Washington all played with Ashcraft on the East squad.

Ashcraft was one of 12 players from the Gulf South Conference played that played for the East squad on Friday night. In addition to the 12 GSC players selected to play on the East squad, Henderson State defensive back Devon Hughes played for the West squad. The other GSC players that played with Ashcraft, Manning and Schneider on Friday were North Alabama running back Mike McClendon, Ouachita Baptist receiver Julius Pruitt, North Alabama receiver Ed Gant, Delta State receiver Chad Schroeder, Ouachita Baptist tight end Bob Ruffing, Harding offensive lineman Ross Conn, Delta State offensive lineman Mark Ellis and Delta State linebacker Anthony King.

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