

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

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ARKANSAS TECH'S COLE BARTHEL EARNS HONOR FROM LITTLE ROCK TOUCHDOWN CLUB

RUSSELLVILLE, Arkansas – Arkansas Tech senior quarterback **Cole Barthel** was selected by the Little Rock Touchdown Club as Tech's Player of the Year this past Sunday.

Barthel and 13 other players from Arkansas schools will be honored by the club at its fourth annual banquet on Saturday, Jan. 10, at the Embassy Suites Hotel in West Little Rock. Each award winner from the college and high school ranks will be honored with a video presentation, receive a large club plaque and be given the opportunity to speak. The banquet is scheduled to get underway at 7 p.m. and tickets are \$35 each and the club also has tables and sponsorships available.

In addition to honoring the Players of the Year from the 13 Arkansas colleges and universities, the club will honor the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette's* Arkansas High School Players and Coach of the Year in each classification, the SEC Players and Coach of the Year, along with handing out the third-annual Paul Eells Award.

Besides Barthel, others Player of the Year from Arkansas schools are Arkansas sophomore tight end D.J. Williams, Arkansas State junior defensive end Alex Carrington, Arkansas-Pine Bluff senior defensive back John Keith, Arkansas Baptist sophomore quarterback Nate Sims, Arkansas-Monticello sophomore quarterback Scott Buisson, Central Arkansas senior quarterback Nathan Brown, Harding senior linebacker Sevohn Greer, Henderson State senior receiver Garrett Manning, Ouachita Baptist senior receiver Julius Pruitt and Southern Arkansas senior linebacker Steven Danenhauer.

Barthel, a native of Decatur, Ala., was a three-year letterwinner for the Wonder Boys and was one of 24 candidates this past season for the Harlon Hill Award, which is given annually to the top NCAA Division II college football player. He finished his career with the Wonder Boys as one of the top quarterbacks in school history. He closed out his career as the school's all-record holder in career touchdown passes (43), career pass completions (445), single-season pass completions (224 in 2008), single-season passing attempts (372 in 2008), single-game mark for touchdown passes (6 vs. West Georgia in 2007), most career 300-yard passing games (5) and the school's all-time record for most touchdowns responsible for (56), which was held by **John Tucker** (54), the original 'Wonder Boy.' In his Tech career, Barthel, who was a second-round draft pick (71st overall selection) by the Atlanta Braves in the 2001 Major League Baseball Amateur Draft, completed nearly 63 percent of his passes as he was 445-for-715 through the air for 4,901 yards and had 43 touchdown passes and 21 interceptions. In addition, he carried the ball 122 times for 378 yards and scored 13 rushing touchdowns,

including a team-best 10 this past season. He finished second in Tech career total offensive yards (5,279), second in single-season passing yards (2,674 in 2008), second in single-season total offense yards (2,850 in 2008) and third in career passing yards (4,901). After missing seven games over the previous two seasons, Barthel started in all 10 games as a senior and was 224-for-372 passing for 2,674 yards and had 10 interceptions and 17 touchdowns. He averaged 267.4 passing yards and 285 yards of total offense per game and accounted for 27 of Tech's 42 scores. In his Tech career, Barthel, who played four seasons of baseball in Braves organization, making it as high as Double A ball, accounted for 57 plays of 20 or more yards, including 35 such plays this past season. He threw two or more touchdown passes in 10 career games and had seven career games with three or more touchdown passes.

"I am extremely proud for Cole. He is very deserving of this honor from the Little Rock Touchdown Club," Tech Head Football Coach and Athletic Director **Steve Mullins** said. "Cole has given his all to Arkansas Tech and he will leave here holding numerous records."

Barthel joins former Wonder Boys – receiver **Chris Gunter** (2007), receiver **Mark Caldwell** (2006), linebacker **Mike Houston** (2005) and defensive end **Cedric Cursh** (2004) as the Little Rock Touchdown Club's Tech Player of the Year award winners.

In addition to honoring all the Players of the Year from the Arkansas schools, the Touchdown Club will also honor Florida quarterback Tim Tebow and Alabama defensive back Rashad Johnson as the SEC Offensive and Defensive Players of the Year respectively, while Alabama's Nick Saban was named the SEC Coach of the Year and Texas quarterback Colt McCoy was named the club's National Player of the Year.

The High School Player and Coach of the Year Award winners this year are as follows.

- Class 7A – Player - Bentonville's Chase Baggett
Coach – Bentonville's Barry Lunney, Jr.
- Class 6A - Player – Lake Hamilton's Phillip Butterfield
Coach – Jonesboro's Randy Coleman
- Class 5A - Player – Pulaski Academy's Spencer Keith
Coach – Helena-West Helena Central's Russell Smith
- Class 4A - Player – Pine Bluff Dollarway's Jesse Grandy
Coach – Shiloh Christian's Josh Floyd
- Class 3A - Player – Mayflower's DeShawn Bagby
Coach – Charleston's Doug Loughridge
- Class 2A - Player – Junction City's Bryan Jones
Coach – Bigelow's Jeff Starks.

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