

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 2, 2009

Contact: Ben Greenberg, SID (479) 968-0645

ARKANSAS TECH'S NICK GRAZIANO EARNS HIS SECOND CONSECUTIVE GSC OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE WEEK HONOR

RUSSELLVILLE, Arkansas – Arkansas Tech's **Nick Graziano** has repeated as this week's Gulf South Conference Offensive Player of the Week following his record-setting effort in leading the Wonder Boys to its 35-23 win Saturday at home on Senior Night over Delta State.

Graziano, a transfer from the University of Nevada, earns this fourth Offensive Player of the Week accolade this season and second straight honor as he was also honored by the league last week following the Henderson State game, along with being honored on Aug. 31 and Sept. 28. It is the seventh time this season that Tech has had a player honored by the league as a Player of the Week as senior receiver/return specialist **Frantz Simeon** (Belle Glade, Fla.) was named the Special Teams Player of the Week on Oct. 17 and Sept. 7, while senior kicker/punter **Travis Cockerham** (Bryant, Ark.) was named the Special Teams Player of the Week last Monday and junior defensive back **Tario Dansby** (Ashdown, Ark.) was named the Defensive Player of the Week on Sept. 28.

With his fourth Offensive Player of the Week honor, Graziano becomes the first GSC player to earn Offensive Player of the Week accolades four times in one season since Valdosta State's Lance Funderburk was honored by the league four times during the 1996 season. In addition, Graziano becomes just the second Wonder Boy and first since **Ed Duncan** in 1999 to earn three or more Offensive Player of the Week honors in a single season.

In Saturday's home win over Delta State, Graziano accounted for 546 of Tech's 632 total yards of offense, as the Moraga, Calif., native carried the ball 15 times for 196 yards and scored on an 82-yard touchdown run in the fourth quarter to give the Wonder Boys a 35-17 edge and he was 27-for-54 passing for 350 yards and had two touchdowns and one interception. The 546 yards of offense is a single-game Tech record and also the sixth-best total offensive effort in GSC history. Along with gaining a school record 546 yards of offense, 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 became 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.

Along with Graziano, the league named Harding redshirt freshman linebacker Kennard Henderson and Southern Arkansas punter Zach Massingill as the GSC Defensive and Special Teams Players of the Week respectively.

Henderson becomes the second Harding defender to claim Defensive Player of the Week accolades this season as he helped spearhead the Bisons defense to its 27-22 win Saturday at home over Henderson State. Against the Reddies, Henderson collected a career-high 14 total tackles, including seven solo stops, along with forcing a fumble and also returning a fumble 50 yards for a touchdown to give Harding a 21-10 lead in the third quarter.

Massingill earns this second special teams honor in the past three weeks in helping lead SAU to a 24-22 non-conference win Saturday at Incarnate Word. In the win over the Cardinals, Massingill punted five times for 223 yards and averaged 44.6 yards per punt. For the game, he downed two of his punts inside the 20-yard line and also had a 66-yard punt in the win.

Graziano and the rest of his Wonder Boy teammates conclude the 2009 regular season on Saturday, Nov. 7, when they travel to Searcy, Ark., to face Harding (5-5 overall, 3-4 GSC) in a 2 p.m. game at First Security Stadium on the Harding campus. Tech enters Saturday's game looking to remain in the hunt to earn an NCAA Division II Playoff berth as the Wonder Boys are sporting a 7-2 overall record and 5-2 mark in the GSC.

-- Tech Athletics --