

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

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ARKANSAS TECH RANKED 24TH IN PRESEASON DIVISION II POLL IN SPORTING NEWS COLLEGE FOOTBALL 2009 PREVIEW MAGAZINE

RUSSELLVILLE, Arkansas – With the kickoff of the 2009 football season a little less than three months away, Arkansas Tech is ranked 24th in the Preseason NCAA Division II Top 25 Poll by the *Sporting News* College Football 2009 Preview magazine.

Tech, who finished last season with its fifth consecutive non-losing record (5-5), is one of four Gulf South Conference schools ranked in the magazine's Preseason Division II Top 25 Poll as two-time defending GSC Champion Delta State is ranked fourth in the poll, while North Alabama is ranked 11th and Valdosta State checks in at No. 19.

In the magazine's Division II preview, the writer of the article says, "there is reason for optimism at Arkansas Tech, which returns 16 starters and adds University of Nevada transfer **Nick Graziano** at quarterback. Defensively, the top eight tacklers return for new defensive coordinator **Jeff Byrd**, as the Wonder Boys try to crack the upper echelon of the GSC."

Along with announcing its Preseason Top 25 Poll, the *Sporting News* also released its Preseason Division II All-America team, the top six games to watch this coming season and a preview of each of the four Division II regions.

The Preseason Division II All-America Team has three players from the GSC listed as Arkansas-Monticello junior quarterback Scott Buisson was named as an athlete of the First-Team Offense, while Delta State senior linebacker Lardester Hicks-Green and North Alabama senior linebacker Michael Johnson were named to the First-Team Defense. In addition, North Alabama's home game on Sept. 5 with Carson-Newman was named one of the six Division II games to watch this season.

Tech, who is the 10th all-time winningest NCAA Division II football program with 511 wins entering the 2009 season, will open its 95th season of intercollegiate competition on Thursday, Aug. 27 at Northeastern State. Kickoff for the season opener is set for 7 p.m. at Doc Wadley Stadium in Tahlequah, Okla.

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