

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

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TECH ATHLETICS TO PRESENT CHAMPIONSHIP RINGS TO THREE TEAMS AT HALFTIME OF SATURDAY'S FAMILY DAY GAME AGAINST ARKANSAS-MONTICELLO

RUSSELLVILLE, Arkansas – The Arkansas Tech University Athletic Department has announced that it will present championship rings to its volleyball, softball and men's basketball teams at halftime of this Saturday's Family Day football game against Arkansas-Monticello.

The rings will be presented to the players in attendance at Saturday's game by the coaches of each team and Tech President **Dr. Robert C. Brown**. The ring presentation will begin right after the football teams leave the field for halftime.

"I'm excited that we are able to present the rings to our championship teams from last season at halftime of our Family Day game with Arkansas-Monticello," Tech Athletic Director and Head Football Coach **Steve Mullins** said. "These three teams give us a lot to be excited about a year ago and I'm proud of their accomplishments."

The Golden Suns volleyball team finished last season with a 31-5 overall record and an 11-1 mark in the Gulf South Conference West Division to earn its fourth GSC West Division title since joining the league in 1996 and its first division title since 2000. Head Coach **Kristy Bayer** was named the GSC West Division Coach of the Year, while **Brennae Benda** (Woodstock, Ill.) was named the GSC West Division Freshman of the Year. In addition, **Kayla Allison, Racheal Urquhart, Dana Florian** and junior middle blocker **Sarah Von Lienen** (Lakeland, Tenn.) were named All-GSC West Division selections.

Tech's softball team is being presented rings for the second consecutive year as the Golden Suns repeated as GSC West Division Champions in 2009. Tech finished the 2009 season with a 42-21 overall record and a 19-9 mark in the GSC West Division. The 42 wins set a new school single-season record for victories, while the 63 games played was also a new single-season school record. Tech, who is coached by **Gidget Pambianchi**, also advanced to the championship round of last year's rain-shortened GSC Tournament for the second consecutive season. Seven Golden Suns were named All-GSC West Division selections, including four first-team selections and junior first baseman **Tiphani Moon** (Eules, Texas) was named a Second-Team Daktronics All-South Region selection.

The final honored team on Saturday will be the Wonder Boys Basketball team. The Wonder Boys went to unprecedented heights during the 2008-09 season as they captured the school's first-ever GSC title in men's basketball and advanced to the NCAA Division II Basketball Tournament for the first time since moving up from the NAIA level in 1996. The Wonder Boys, under the direction of Head Coach **Mark Downey**, finished last season with a 23-9 overall record and advanced to the semifinals of the NCAA D-II South Regional where they lost in overtime to the regional's top-seed and host school Florida Southern. Downey's squad achieved numerous firsts last season, including

earning its first-ever national ranking at the Division II level and was also ranked for five consecutive weeks, advanced to its first-ever GSC Tournament finals appearance in just its third-ever GSC Tournament appearance, earned back-to-back GSC Tournament berths for the first time since joining the league, won a school-record nine GSC games and went 4-5 against nationally-ranked opponents. In addition, set a new school record for blocked shots and posted its second consecutive winning season and only its fourth at the D-II level. Several Wonder Boys achieved honors, including 6-foot-10 center **Thiago Cordeiro**, who was named a Second-Team All-South Region selection, along with being a First-Team All-GSC West Division selection and a member of GSC All-Tournament Team. Other players honored last season were guard **Chad Henderson**, who was a First-Team All-GSC West Division selection and a member of the GSC All-Tournament Team, while senior guard **Brandon Friedel** (Victoria, Texas) was named to the GSC All-Tournament Team and senior guard **Renard Allen** (New Orleans, La.) was named the MVP of the GSC Tournament.

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