

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

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GOLDEN SUNS SWEEP DOUBLEHEADER AT ARKANSAS-MONTICELLO; EARNS SECOND CONSECUTIVE GSC WEST DIVISION TITLE

MONTICELLO, Arkansas – Arkansas Tech Golden Suns Softball made some more history here Saturday afternoon by sweeping a doubleheader against Arkansas-Monticello and earning its second consecutive Gulf South Conference West Division championship in the process at Blossoms Field.

Tech opened the doubleheader by posting a 2-0 shutout win and then earning 5-1 win in the nightcap to seal its second straight division title. In addition, it was Tech's eighth straight win and its sixth straight victory in GSC play.

With the sweep, Tech improves its record to 39-19 overall and 18-8 in the GSC, while UAM falls to 37-14 overall and 16-12 in the league.

Along with earning its second straight GSC West Division title, several Golden Suns set new schools records in the doubleheader. Senior rightfielder **Sarah Pratt** (Garland, Texas) became the school's all-time leader in hits (204) with her two base hits in the first game, while sophomore first baseman **Tiphani Moon** (Eules, Texas) set a new school record for both RBIs and home runs, as she drove in her 76th career run in the first game and then blasted a two-run homer just over the left field fence in the second game for her school record 16th career homer, which bettered the old mark of 15 she shared with former Golden Sun **Nicole Berry** (2005-06). Pratt broke the hits record of 202 held by former Golden Sun **Molly Schweigert** (2004-08).

In the first game, both Tech junior hurler **Casey Hammons** (Carthage, Ark.) and UAM freshman pitcher Kayla Jackson were locked in a scoreless pitcher's duel for the first five innings.

Tech, though, broke open the scoreless game in the top of the sixth inning thanks to two singles and a sacrifice bunt. In the inning, Pratt led off with a single to center, advanced to second on a sacrifice bunt by junior catcher **Roxie Palacios** (Crosby, Texas) and then scored on an RBI single by sophomore first baseman **Tiphani Moon** (Eules, Texas). The RBI by Moon was her school record 76th of her career, bettering the old mark of 75 held by **Sara Goodman** (2003-06).

The Golden Suns added to its lead in the top of the seventh thanks to two hits, a wild pitch by Jackson and a throwing error by UAM catcher Amy Mardis, which allowed sophomore second baseman **Jessica Fields** (Springdale, Ark.) to score from third base. Fields walked to lead off the inning, advanced to second on single by senior leftfielder **Kacie Visina** (Rowlett, Texas), moved to third on a wild pitch and then scored on Mardis' error.

Those two runs were enough for Hammons (18-6) to pick up her 17th complete game and seventh shutout of the season. Hammons allowed just three singles and no runs, while walking two and striking out two.

Pratt and Visina each had two hits for the Golden Suns, who finished with seven hits for the game. Jackson had two of UAM's three hits, while Mardis picked up the other Cotton Blossom hit in the loss.

In the first inning, Pratt led off the game with a double, which was her school-record 203rd base hit and the two hits in the game set a new single-season Tech record for hits with 74.

Jackson (23-7) took the loss on the mound for UAM as she pitched seven innings and allowed seven hits and two runs, while walking one and striking out three.

In the nightcap, Tech jumped in front 1-0 in the top of the first inning thanks to a single by Pratt, a bunt by sophomore second baseman **Shanda Jameson** (Mansfield, Texas), a wild pitch by Randa Perry and a sacrifice bunt RBI by Palacios, which plated Pratt. Pratt's run was the 101st of her Tech career, which is second most in school history.

Tech's lead grew to 3-0 in the second inning thanks to two hits and a UAM error that allowed an unearned run to score. In the inning, the Golden Suns first run came on an RBI fielder's choice by Jameson, which plated freshman pitcher **Morgan Rodgers** (Mansfield, Texas), who had led off the inning with a single to left center. Tech's second run came when senior centerfielder **Krista Cifuentes** (Clinton, Ark.) scored on a throwing error by UAM third baseman Meagan Wilson.

The Cotton Blossoms, who are ranked eighth in the latest NCAA Division II South Region poll, pulled within 3-1 in the bottom of the second thanks to two hits and two errors in the inning by Visina.

Tech put the game out of reach in the seventh inning on Moon's two-run homer off of Jackson. The homer tied Moon with former Golden Sun **Lindsey Klabacha** for the school's single-season home run lead with nine.

Hammons (19-6) earned the win in relief of Rodgers as she tossed 5.2 innings and allowed no runs and no hits, while walking two and striking out one. Rodgers earned a no-decision as she pitched 1.1 innings and allowed two hits and one run.

Perry (9-7) took the loss for the Cotton Blossoms as she tossed four innings and allowed six hits and three runs (two earned runs), while walking two and fanning none. Jackson pitched the final three innings and allowed one hit and two runs, while walking one and striking out two.

Cifuentes led Tech's 7-hit attack with two hits, while Moon drove in two runs.

Both teams combined to commit six errors as Tech had four errors and UAM had two defensive miscues.

The two teams will close out the four-game series and the 2009 regular season with another doubleheader on Sunday beginning at 1 p.m.

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