

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

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

ARKANSAS TECH SOFTBALL OPENS GSC TOURNAMENT WITH SHUTOUT WIN OVER WEST ALABAMA, ADVANCES TO FACE TOP-RANKED ALABAMA-HUNTSVILLE IN SECOND ROUND

SOUTHAVEN, Mississippi – Arkansas Tech Golden Suns Softball opened play here Friday in the first round of the 2009 Gulf South Conference Tournament with an 8-0 victory in five innings due to the 8-run mercy rule over West Alabama at the Greenbrook Softball Complex.

With the win, Tech matched its school record for single-season wins with 41, which was set last season, and improved to 41-20 overall and raised its GSC Tournament record to 4-2. UWA fell to 42-17 with the loss and falls in the consolation bracket.

In Friday's game, Tech led 1-0 heading into the bottom of the fifth before sending 10 hitters to the plate and plated seven runs to earn the win and advance to face No. 1 ranked Alabama-Huntsville at around 5:30 p.m. Friday in a winner's bracket match-up. UAH advanced with a 5-1 win over Delta State in their first-round match-up Friday morning.

Tech, who is the two-time GSC West Division champion, broke open a scoreless game in the bottom of the third inning thanks to a throwing error that sailed out of play by Brittany McGee on a ball hit by senior rightfielder **Sarah Pratt** (Garland, Texas). McGee's error allowed senior leftfielder **Kacie Visina** (Rowlett, Texas) to score from second base on the play. Visina had reached base on a lead-off infield single.

In the top of the fifth inning, UWA, who is ranked eighth in the latest NCAA Division II South Region Poll, broke up a no-hit bid by junior hurler **Casey Hammons** (Carthage, Texas) with a lead-off single by Courtney Gordon. Gordon's single would be UWA's only hit of the game as Hammons pitched five innings, walked three, struck out five to improve to 20-6 on the season.

In the bottom of the fifth, Tech opened the scoring on an RBI single by Pratt and then added its third run on an RBI fielder's choice bunt by sophomore second baseman **Shanda Jameson** (Mansfield, Texas). Tech's fourth run was driven in on an RBI single by sophomore first baseman **Tiphani Moon** (Eules, Texas) and then junior catcher **Roxie Palacios** (Crosby, Texas) followed with an RBI up the middle to make the score 5-0. After Hammons reached on a fielding error by UWA third baseman Laura Bagwell, junior third baseman **Taylor Gates** (Paris, Texas) drove in two runs on her single up the middle and ended the game on an RBI fielder's choice by freshman shortstop **Stephanie Lasley** (Greenbrier, Ark.), which plated Hammons with an unearned run.

McGee (19-7) took the loss the Lady Tigers as she pitched 4.1 innings and allowed six hits and five runs. Jessica Cervantes faced five batters and failed to record an out as she allowed three hits and three runs.

Visina went 2-for-2 at the plate with two runs scored, while Pratt had two hits, a run scored and Gates had 2 RBIs. In addition, Jameson set a new GSC record for sacrifice bunts in a single-season with her 26th of the season in the first inning.

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