

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

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

TECH VOLLEYBALL ANNOUNCES THE SIGNING OF FOUR PLAYERS TO NATIONAL LETTERS OF INTENT

RUSSELLVILLE, Arkansas – Arkansas Tech Volleyball Head Coach **Kristy Bayer** announced recently that **Flavia Canossa, Kelsey Cheatham, Lindsey Layes** and **Brittany Ryan** signed National Letters of Intent during the spring signing period to join the Golden Suns in 2009.

These four signees will join **Carly Florian**, who signed her National Letter of Intent to join Tech during the early signing period in November, as Tech's recruiting class for the 2009 season.

All four of these signees will join a Tech team that is looking to replace four seniors and three starters from last season's 31-5 squad that won the GSC West Division title for the fourth time in school history and first time since 2000.

"I am extremely pleased with this 2009 recruiting class," Bayer said. "All four of these players will fit well into our system here at Tech."

Canossa, a 5-foot-11 setter comes to Tech from Sao Paulo, Brazil. Canossa, who will be a sophomore at Tech, played for both Esporte Clube Gaurulhos and Banespa, which are two of the top club teams in Brazil. Canossa will become the third Brazilian on the Golden Suns team, joining sophomore libero **Marcella Mascarenhas** (Sao Paulo, Brazil) and freshman outside hitter **Natalia Oliveira** (Belo Horizonte, Brazil).

"Flavia has an excellent delivery and touch on the ball. She also understands the game of volleyball, and the ability to deliver a great offense," Bayer said. "Once she understands our offensive system, she will be a great addition to this team."

Cheatham, a 5-foot-10 outside hitter, middle blocker and right side hitter comes to Tech after a standout prep career at Denton High School in Denton, Texas. Cheatham was a two-year starter and a three-year letterwinner at DHS and was named a two-time First-Team All-District selection and was a Second-Team DFW All-Area selection this past season. Helped lead Denton to two Bi-District titles in both 2006 and 2007 and a District championship in 2006. In addition, she was named the Tournament MVP as the Ryan Tournament in 2007, was named the school's Offensive Player of the Year in 2008, was named as one of the Top 20 servers in the DFW area in 2007 and earned several Player of the Week honors from the *Denton Chronicle*. Along with playing volleyball at DHS, Cheatham also was a three-year letterwinner in track, named an Academic All-District Volleyball honoree in 2008 and played club volleyball with the Dallas Juniors, one of the top club teams in the state of Texas.

"Kelsey is very athletic and can play any attacking position in the front row," Bayer said. "She will add to the depth of our team. Although she is only 5'10", she is extremely quick, can elevate off the ground and has great court speed.

"She has the ability to compete next year at any three of the attacking positions."

Layes, a 5-foot-7 libero/defensive specialist comes to Tech from Southside High School in Fort Smith, Ark. At Southside, Layes was named an All-State selection this past year and was also named to the All-State Volleyball Tournament team. Led Southside to back-to-back Class 7A state semifinal appearances in 2007 and 2008 and was a member of the school's 7A State Championship team in 2006. Layes was selected and attended the USA Volleyball High Performance Camp in Colorado Springs, Colo., in 2008 and was selected to the Arkansas Top 25 Team this past season. In addition to those honors, she was also awarded the Best Defense Award at the Arkansas Top 25 Camp. Was named the FCA Athlete of the Year Award winner in 2006 and is a member of the National Honor Society, the editor of the 2009 Literary Magazine and an honors graduate from Southside. She played six years of club volleyball with Fort Smith Juniors.

"Lindsey has been a participant in our summer camps and I noticed her great work ethic and attitude right away," the Tech coach said. "She will give this program 100 percent all the time."

Ryan, a 5-foot-11 outside hitter and middle blocker from Mena High School in Mena, Ark. Ryan was named a two-time All-State and All-State Tournament Team selection and was also an All-Tournament selection at both the Paris and Mena Tournaments in both 2007 and 2008. In addition, she won the school's Best Hitter Award in 2007 and was selected to compete at the Arkansas Top 25 Camp. Along with playing volleyball at MHS, Ryan also has been a 3-time All-State and All-District selection in track and was an All-State selection in indoor track in 2008. Was a member of Mena's two-time state champion 3,200-meter relay team in both 2006 and 2007 and has won a total of 53 medals in track. Ryan, who carries a 3.6 cumulative GPA in high school, also made it State Bowling in both 2008 and 2009.

"Brittany attended an open tryout that we had, and she tested off the charts in our physical testing," Bayer said. "She may be the best pure athlete that I have had come through this program. While she will need to gain volleyball experience, her athleticism will greatly help her jump to the next level."

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