

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

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TECH VOLLEYBALL TABBED SECOND IN PRESEASON WEST DIVISION GULF SOUTH CONFERENCE COACHES' POLL; ALLISON NAMED PRESEASON ALL-GSC WEST DIVISION SELECTION

RUSSELLVILLE, Arkansas – Arkansas Tech Golden Suns Volleyball was selected to finish second in the West Division of the Preseason Gulf South Conference Coaches' Poll released by the league on Thursday.

The poll was voted on by the league's 14 volleyball head coaches and the coaches were not allowed to vote for their own teams.

Tech, who finished second in the West Division last season with a 25-12 overall record and a 9-5 GSC mark, returns five starters and eight letterwinners from last season and welcome seven freshmen when practice begins on Monday.

"I'm not surprised at all by the preseason poll prediction," Tech Head Volleyball Coach **Kristy Kale** said. "We were picked actually where we finished last season."

The Golden Suns received 31 points, including one vote for first place and five votes for second place in the preseason poll and finished five points behind Harding in the poll, as the Lady Bisons received six first place votes, 36 points and five votes to win the overall GSC title.

In addition to being picked second in the West Division, Tech sophomore setter **Kayla Allison** (Tulsa, Okla.), a returning Second-Team All-GSC pick, was named a preseason All-GSC Division selection. Freshmen outside hitter **Kirsten Boyd** (Russellville, Ark.) and middle blocker **Katie Stamm** (Marysville, Mich.) were to the Top Newcomers list.

Allison recorded 1,465 assists (10.77 apg) and 322 digs (2.37 dpg) last season for the Golden Suns. The 1,465 assists was second most on Tech's single-season chart.

Joining Allison on the Preseason GSC West Division team were Harding teammates, middle blocker Katie Westmoreland, setter Leah Tepe, and right side hitter Tiffany Morrison, along with Christian Brothers middle blocker Laura Washington, Arkansas-Monticello outside hitter Amanda Sayre, Ouachita Baptist middle blocker Breanne Garrett and Southern Arkansas outside hitter Brandi Beeson. Garrett, Washington and Westmoreland were First-Team All-GSC selections last season.

In the preseason poll, Harding was picked to win the West Division for the fifth consecutive season, while North Alabama was tabbed to win both

the East Division and the GSC Championship. UNA has won nine of the last 10 GSC Volleyball championships.

Behind Harding and Tech in the poll was Christian Brothers (26 points) in third place, while Henderson State (21 points) was tabbed to finish fourth and Ouachita Baptist (14 points) was selected fifth. Rounding out the poll was Arkansas-Monticello (10 points) in sixth place and Southern Arkansas (9 points) in the seventh place.

Meanwhile, in the East Division, West Florida was tabbed to finish second behind UNA with 32 points, while Alabama-Huntsville (24 points) was tabbed to finish third and West Georgia (20 points) was picked fourth. West Florida received two votes from the coaches to win the overall championship. Rounding the East Division was Montevallo (19 points) in fifth place, Valdosta State (11 points) in sixth place and West Alabama (8 points) was tabbed seventh.

The 2006 GSC Volleyball season concludes with the top four teams in each division advancing to the GSC Volleyball Tournament on November 3-4 at the site of the East Division champion.

Tech opens its 2006 season on Aug. 25-26 when they host the Golden Suns Spikefest at Tucker Coliseum. The Golden Suns will open the tournament by playing Fort Valley State at 1 p.m., before finishing the first day playing Texas A&M-Commerce at 7 p.m.

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