

Lamar, McNeese State Capture SLC Championships

Written by Yolande Y. Lezine
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The Lamar Cardinals and the McNeese State Lady Cowgirls captured the Southland Conference Tournament Championships, giving them automatic bids into the NCAA Tournament.

McNeese State's Caitlyn Baggett, who scored 21 points, including the winning free throws with 5.6 seconds left, to lead the Lady Cowgirls to a 60-56 victory over Stephen F. Austin in the championship game.

Brittney Matthew and Annette Davis scored 12 points each and Ashlee Mells and Porsha Roberts each had 11 for Stephen F. Austin, which was in the tournament championship game for the first time since 2007.

"We only had three seniors on our roster," SFA head coach Brandon Schneider said. "And watching McNeese State celebrate provides perfect incentive for us this offseason."

Caitlyn's twin sister Ashlyn Baggett had 14 points and five assists, and Kendra Wells grabbed 12 rebounds, including the offensive board that may have saved the season for McNeese State (26-7).

The Ladyjacks, who finished (23-9), turned the ball over on their last frantic possession, and Baggett tacked on two more free throws at the end. SFA outrebounded McNeese 36-33 in the

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game, but the season came down to one rebound that the Ladyjacks couldn't get.

On the men's side, head coach Pat Knight and the Lamar Cardinals defeated McNeese State 70-49 to win the men's title and a spot in the men's NCAA Tournament.

Senior point guard Mike James was named the Southland Tournament MVP after scoring 26 points in the final. James has averaged 21.5 points during that run.

Teammates Anthony Miles and Devon Lamb joined James on the SLC All-Tournament team.

Lamar had a six-game push to the NCAA Tournament including five wins by double-figure point margins, including three by at least 21 points.