

# 2012 - 2013 Hoops Review

## The Baylor Lariat

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# ENDING ON A HIGH NOTE

**A.J. Walton  
is carried off  
court with leg  
injury**

**Baylor takes  
first ever Big  
12 NIT title**

**Ken Starr and  
Ian McCaw  
rush court to  
celebrate**

**MEN BRING HOME NIT CHAMPIONSHIP**

PHOTO BY DREW MILLS | ROUND UP STAFF

# Baylor men beat Iowa in NIT Championship game

By DANIEL HILL  
SPORTS WRITER



DREW MILLS | ROUND-UP PHOTOGRAPHER

Senior guard Pierre Jackson hoists the NIT Most Outstanding Player trophy after helping the Bears beat Iowa 74-54 Thursday night.

14-9 lead and some momentum to counter Iowa's 7-2 run following their timeout.

Freshman forward Rico Gathers scored on the next two Baylor possessions on a slam dunk from a Jackson assist and then again on a layup from a Jefferson assist to give the Bears a 20-14 lead.

Hawkeye Josh Oglesby countered with a three, and then Walton buried a baseline jumper with an assist from Jackson to give the Bears a 22-17 lead.

Walton stole the ball and passed it up ahead to Jackson, who acrobatically hung in the air to clear space and made a highlight layup.

Going into the half, Baylor led 27-22.

Starting the second half, Iowa played with a sudden sense of urgency. The Hawkeyes cut the game to a one-possession contest when Eric May drained a 3-pointer and then converted on another layup to cut the Baylor lead to three, 30-27.

That was as close as the game would get from there as Baylor stepped on the throttle and put away the Iowa Hawkeyes.

Jefferson stepped out and buried a jumper, and then Jackson sank a trey to extend Baylor's lead to 33-27.

Jackson hit two more free throws, and then Jefferson threw down two consecutive vicious slam dunks. Jackson followed up Jefferson's highlight dunks by silencing the pro-Iowa crowd with a cold-blooded step back three.

The game really started to swing Baylor's direction when Gathers, who's not known for his finesse shooting, stepped out and sank a deep jumper to give Baylor a sudden 49-34 lead.

Baylor's lead peaked at 21 when Jackson and Jefferson hooked up on two more slam dunks for Jefferson to put Iowa away with a 60-39 lead.

At this point, the game was Baylor's to win, and Iowa was put into desperation mode.

Iowa started to play at a frenetic pace, and Baylor took advantage of them in transition as junior guard Gary Franklin scored on two layups and Jefferson and Austin each threw down one more dunk.

With 1:14 to play, senior walk-on forward Jacob Neubert entered the game for his last appearance in the Baylor green and gold. Jackson left the court to a rousing ovation from the Baylor faithful.

Baylor walked off the court with a championship and accomplished something that no other Baylor team has done before.

The Bears are bringing the NIT championship trophy from New York City's Madison Square Garden home to Waco's Ferrell Center.

The Baylor Bears won the NIT championship by defeating Iowa 74-54 Thursday and cut down the nets in victory at New York City's Madison Square Garden. The NIT trophy is Baylor's first-ever NIT Championship, and the Bears also became the first Big 12 team to ever take home the NIT hardware.

Three Baylor Bears were named to the All-NIT first team. Senior guard Pierre Jackson, junior forward Cory Jefferson and freshman center Isaiah Austin were all named as All-NIT first team members.

Pierre Jackson was named the Most Outstanding Player for the NIT. Jackson had a double-double with 17 points and 10 assists. The senior also contributed five rebounds.

The game's leading scorer was Jefferson with 23 points. He also tacked on seven rebounds. Jefferson was nearly perfect from the free-throw line, going 7-8, and also added one block and one steal.

Austin was also named to the All-NIT first team. He added 15 points and nine rebounds in the victory over Iowa.

Defensive specialist and senior guard A.J. Walton was a menace against his Iowa opponents. Walton had six steals, creating mayhem for the Iowa offense.

Walton added five points and five assists to help lead the Bears to victory. Late in the game, Walton ran into an Iowa player and fell to the court.

He was down on the ground for awhile, and then when his Baylor teammates carried him off the court. He did not put any weight on his injured leg.

The Bears started the championship match by jumping out to a 9-2 lead behind the efforts of Austin, Jefferson and a 3-pointer from junior guard Brady Heslip.

Austin scored the first four points of the game with a flurry of offensive moves to create his own shot. Then Heslip added the trey, and Jefferson converted on a layup to give the Bears an early 9-2 lead.

Facing the early deficit, Iowa called timeout to gather themselves. It must have worked because the Hawkeyes rallied to come to within two of Baylor, 11-9.

Austin scored on a jumper from the free-throw line and was fouled on the way up for a chance to convert the 3-point play. Austin nailed the shot from the charity stripe to give Baylor a

## Despite NIT Championship, Baylor men underachieved

By DANIEL HILL  
STAFF WRITER

### SPORTS TAKE

Considering the Bears' lofty pre-season ranking of No. 19 in the country, it's difficult to see this season as nothing short of bittersweet.

Sure, it's fantastic for head coach Scott Drew and seniors Pierre Jackson and A.J. Walton to go out on top in with an NIT championship, but the NIT was never the goal for this group of Bears.

Even though Baylor did win the first NIT in program history and in Big 12 history, this team had the talent to do more.

This season was supposed to be the season the Bears returned to the NCAA's Elite Eight for the third time in four years, not the season where Baylor failed to make the NCAA Tournament entirely.

At the beginning of the season, the Bears teased Baylor Nation by getting off to a record-best 5-1 start in the Big 12. The Bears faltered down the stretch by losing nine of 12 games and ended up missing the NCAA Tournament despite major wins against Kansas, Oklahoma State and Kentucky. The résumé for the Bears fell short of the premiere NCAA tournament so the team had to settle for the secondary NIT tournament.

There were only two Bears who had

truly successful and exceptional campaigns this season: senior point guard Pierre Jackson and junior forward Cory Jefferson.

Jackson led the entire Big 12 in scoring with 19.9 points per game and assists with 7.0 per game. Many times throughout the season, Jackson had to carry the team on his shoulders.

Jefferson also exhibited massive growth and development throughout the course of the season. Jefferson averaged 13 points and 8 rebounds for the year. Those are easily the best season numbers he's achieved in his entire Baylor career. As a redshirt freshman, Jefferson scored 1.6 points per game then as a redshirt sophomore Jefferson scored 3.6 points per game. Jefferson has played so well down the stretch that he is widely considered a late first round to early second round NBA Draft prospect.

While Jefferson and Jackson rose to the occasion, there were other Bears who just didn't live up to expectations this season: freshman center Isaiah Austin and junior guard Brady Heslip.

Austin was highly publicized and favored to be a top pick in the 2013 NBA Draft as a one-and-done prospect. While Austin's season did have highs against Oklahoma early in the Big 12 schedule with a 19 point, 20 re-

bound effort and against BYU in the NIT semifinals with 14 points and 10 rebounds, Austin also disappeared for key moments throughout the season. In the Big 12 Conference tournament, Austin pulled a no-show against Oklahoma State with two points and one rebound. If Austin dreams of being an NBA player one day, he can't get pushed around in the paint as he's done so often this season and he can't disappear in monumental moments.

Heslip was billed as one of the best three-point shooters in college basketball, Heslip flopped throughout the course of Big 12 play.

Heslip's best effort in Big 12 play came against a dismal West Virginia team when he was practically unguarded and hit 6 treys and posted 20 points.

In other central Big 12 games, Heslip couldn't get open and hit the deep shots against teams that played honest defense. Heslip scored just three points against Iowa State and didn't score a single point in the Big 12 tournament.

Winning the NIT takes a portion of disappointment away from this season's men's basketball team. RG3 showed Baylor Nation that they should expect to win in football and now Scott Drew's Baylor basketball teams have done the same. Baylor expects to win now. Winning the NIT is a solid accomplishment, but Baylor needs to aim higher.



DREW MILLS | ROUND-UP PHOTOGRAPHER

Seniors guards A.J. Walton and Pierre Jackson embrace Thursday after defeating Iowa 74-54 to win the NIT Championship.

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## NCAA brackets bound to fail early

By PHILLIP ERICKSEN  
REPORTER

### SPORTS TAKE

During mid-to-late February, a certain air begins to come over the sports world. Everyone feels it and there's no doubt to its source: March Madness. Or as I call it, March Sadness.

Before filling out my bracket this year, I watched hours of analysis of ESPN's so-called "experts" and gained as much insight as I could. I thought I knew what I was doing. I didn't. I really can't emphasize my wrongness enough. Here's what I got:

I correctly predicted 19 or 32 second-round games, 7 of 16 third-round games and one of eight Sweet 16 matchups. Only one of my Elite 8 teams, Louisville, was right. One. No Final Four teams.

What does it all mean? What

can I take away from my intense failure? Am I not a "real sports fan"? Am I just some guy who watches ESPN and thinks I know what I'm talking about, when I don't?

Spinning into a pit of self-denial is never very fun, especially when it's caused by only a few college basketball games.

Having a busted bracket is equivalent to being the last one picked for kickball in grade school or going to the dentist. It's as bad as dropping your phone or having to retake Chapel.

Why even predict these games? We might as well predict the weather each day or how many times a bird dog barks within one minute.

There's no way to pick these

games correctly. It's impossible.

The seeds don't mean anything once the game begins: it's just two teams and a basketball on a court. In this tournament, a 15-seeded Florida Gulf Coast beats second-seeded Georgetown, then wins another game after that. Bracket busted.

Wisconsin, coming off of a huge win over Indiana to take the Big 10 Tournament, loses in the first round to 12th-seeded Mississippi. So much for momentum and a predicted Final Four appearance.

Kansas, also after winning its conference championship in dominant fashion, loses in the Sweet 16. So much for a predicted national championship.

I try not to beat myself up over this. After all, the NCAA tournament is all about great players and great games. Buzzer-beaters and Cinderella teams go down in histo-

ry and NBA draft stocks skyrocket or plummet. It's an exciting time for sports.

Nevertheless, knowing you have a busted bracket is not exciting. It's frustrating and embarrassing, especially if you're in it with a group of friends where everyone can see.

Studying stats and reading scouting reports won't help predict anything. Bad shooting nights, injuries, controversial calls or just pure, dumb luck can easily translate to lost games in this tournament, and those are impossible to pick. I think I've finally accepted that after using my studying method for as long as I can remember.

It's all fun and games, but there's still something telling me otherwise.

The need to be correct on these goes beyond regular excitement. It's hope.

TRAVIS TAYLOR | LARIAT PHOTOGRAPHER

No. 34 forward Cory Jefferson dunks the ball during the match against TCU on Saturday evening, Jan. 12, 2013, in the Ferrell Center. The Bears defeated the Horned Frogs 51-40.



# Men's season recap

DREW MILLS | ROUND UP PHOTOGRAPHER



No. 55 point guard Pierre Jackson passes the ball during the semifinals round of the National Invitation Tournament Championship on Tuesday, April 2, at Madison Square Garden in New York. The Bears defeated the Cougars 76-70 to advance to the championship.

MONICA LAKE | LARIAT PHOTOGRAPHER

No. 2 forward Rico Gathers dunks the ball in the game against Hardin-Simmons on Jan. 19, 2013.



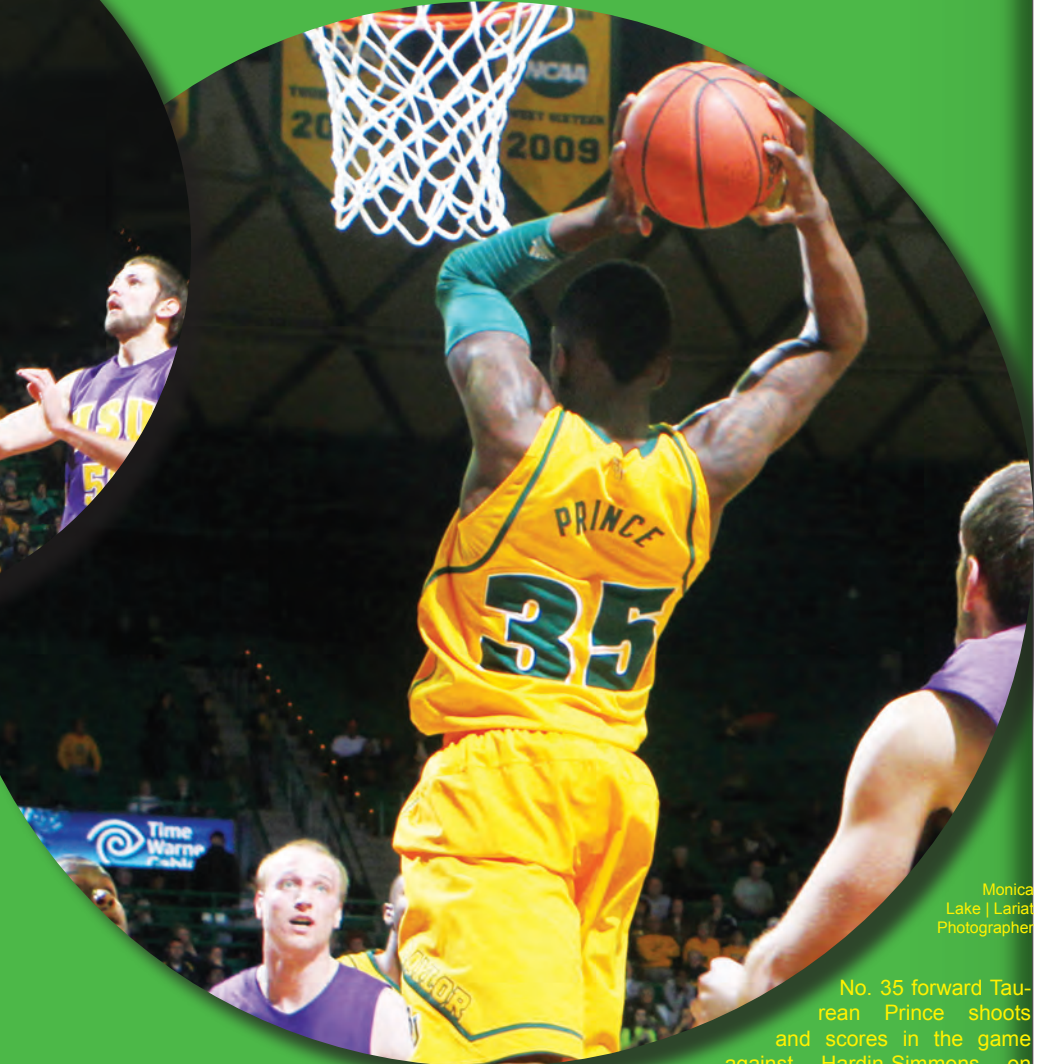
MATT HELLMAN | LARIAT PHOTO EDITOR

During the Big 12 Tournament matchup against OSU on Thursday, Mar. 14, 2013, No. 5 guard Brady Heslip shoots a 3-pointer for Baylor. Unfortunately, the Bears walked away with a 74-72 defeat at the Sprint Center in Kansas, Mo. ending their Big 12 run.



MONICA LAKE | LARIAT PHOTOGRAPHER

No. 35 forward Taurian Prince shoots and scores in the game against Hardin-Simmons on January 19, 2013.



No. 21 center Isaiah Austin

shoots the ball for two points during the semifinals round of the National Invitation Tournament Championship against BYU on Tuesday, April 2, at Madison Square Garden in New York. The Bears defeated the Cougars 76-70 to advance to the championship.



MATT HELLMAN | LARIAT PHOTO EDITOR

During the Big 12 Tournament matchup against OSU on Thursday, Mar. 14, 2013, No. 22 guard A.J. Walton performs a layup earning Baylor another two points. Unfortunately, the Bears walked away with a 74-72 defeat at the Sprint Center in Kansas, Mo. ending their Big 12 run.



DREW MILLS | ROUND UP PHOTOGRAPHER

# Top-ranked Lady Bears fall short of expectations

By **PARMIDA SCHAHHOSSEINI**  
SPORTS WRITER

As tears streamed down the players' faces when the buzzer hit zero, the Baylor Lady Bears came to the realization that their quest for a second consecutive National Title was over. With the expectations high, Baylor saw their chances dwindle with each 3-point jumper Louisville made.

"If Louisville can hit 16 threes a game, good Lord, they'll win a national championship," head coach Kim Mulkey said.

In the Brittney Griner era this loss in the Sweet Sixteen is the earliest Baylor exited the tournament. The Lady Bears went to the Final Four in 2010, the Elite Eight in 2011 and won the National Championship last year.

It was a heartbreaking loss for both the players and the fans because Baylor was the heavy favorite to win a National Title after being the first team in NCAA history to have a 40-0 record. Baylor had the longest winning streak in the nation at 32 games with their only regular season loss coming against Stanford in which they lost by two points. Both of Baylor's losses have been for a combined three points, making this loss worse.

Baylor seemed like an unstoppable force due to all the talent on the team. Despite the talent fundamentals are extremely important in the tournament. A problem for Baylor this season has been free throw shooting. It had the second worst free throw shooting percent in the Big 12 as Baylor only shot 64.9 percent from the line. In close tournament games free throws are important because the competition is better.

Baylor's perimeter defense has also been questioned because of the 3-point shots allowed. On Senior night Baylor played Kansas State and it was tight throughout the game as Wildcats scored 15 3-point shots not allowing Baylor to pull away. However, late in the second quarter Kansas State began to miss shots and Baylor turned up their defense to win the game. Also, Griner's career high 50 points also helped lift Baylor.

Louisville most likely took notice and changed their game plan, making 16 3-point jumpers tying an NCAA record. The Cardinals continued to shoot and Baylor had no response until late in the second half when it was too late.

As much as this may scar us, this team

underachieved considering the talent on this roster. Senior post Brittney Griner and junior guard Odyssey Sims were a force to be reckoned with on the floor as they dominated most basketball games with Griner protecting the paint and Sims leading the other guards to defensive mastery.

The duo were named to three All-American teams including the John R. Wooden Award All-American team, 2012-13 U.S. Basketball Writers Association Women's All-America Team and Associated Press' five-member All-American.

Other seniors such as senior guards Jordan Madden and Kimetria Hayden also had strong years with Madden improving on offense scoring 7.7 points per game compared to 4.3 the previous year. Madden also had the assignment of defending the best player on the opposing team and her defense along with the other guards was the reason why they had a +27.0 scoring margin.

Hayden is ranked in the top 25 in assist to turnover ratio at 2.07 while averaging 7.5 points and 3.97 rebounds per game.

The Big 12's sixth man of the year award winner Destiny Williams accepted her role despite being a starter last year. Williams was effective coming off the bench averaging 8.2 points along with 6.6 rebounds per game.

Despite the shortcomings this season has had high points such as wins over Notre Dame and Connecticut. Griner also recorded a career high nine assists against Kansas State in the Big 12 Tournament and had her 1,000<sup>th</sup> rebound against Rice on November 2012.

In the second round of the NCAA tournament Baylor gave little doubt that they would be beat making their early exit unfathomable. Griner recorded three dunks against Florida State becoming the first woman to record three dunks in a game. Those three dunks increased her career total to 18, an NCAA record.

Griner also has an NCAA record in blocked shots at 748 surpassing Louella Tomlinson on Jan. 25 against Oklahoma. Griner finished her career at Baylor with 3,283 career points, second all-time in the NCAA.

Hayden scored her career 1,000<sup>th</sup> point against Texas on Feb. 9 and continued to move up the scoring charts with her 1,061 career points ranking No. 26 on Baylor's career scoring list.



Junior guard Odyssey Sims falls to the floor and covers her face after Sunday's loss to Louisville in the Sweet Sixteen. Sims finished with 29 points, 10 rebounds and six steals.

## Louisville women top Tennessee to punch ticket to New Orleans

By **JEFF LATZKE**  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Jeff Walz sees no reason to pile on with all the pressure that naturally comes with the NCAA women's tournament.

The Louisville coach wants his players to play fearless, play free and have fun. Even against two of the sport's most intimidating opponents, the formula worked to perfection.

Shoni Schimmel scored 24 points and the plucky Cardinals beat second-seeded Tennessee 86-78 Tuesday night to earn their second trip to the Final Four, continuing a captivating postseason run.

Two nights after taking down Brittney Griner and defending national champion Baylor, the fifth-seeded Cardinals (28-8) built a 20-point lead then withstood a second-half comeback by the powerhouse Lady Vols (27-8) before celebrating another big victory.

"I'm proud of every single one of them, and I know that we're getting a chance to go play in the Final Four. It's a memory these players will never forget," Walz said.

"You beat Baylor with arguably one of the best players to ever play the game, everybody thought that was a fluke. And I promise you no one thought we'd win tonight, either, except this team, and we figured out a way to pull it out."

When it was over, the Cardinals huddled at center court and shouted "Louisville!" in celebration.

The Cardinals became only the second No. 5 seed to reach the national semifinals, joining Southwest Missouri State's 2001 team that featured guard Jackie Stiles, the all-time leading scorer in NCAA history. Only seven teams outside of the top four seeds have ever made it to the Final Four since the NCAA tournament started in 1982.

No team seeded higher than fourth has ever won a game at the Final Four. But the seemingly impossible hasn't stopped this group of Cardinals yet.



ALONZO ADAMS | ASSOCIATED PRESS

Louisville's Shoni Schimmel cuts down a piece of the net after her team defeated Tennessee during their regional final game Tuesday.

First, they took down Griner and her Baylor team that had lost just once in 75 games. Then, it was the eight-time national champion Lady Volunteers.

Next up is a Sunday showdown in New Orleans against Final Four newcomer California, the Spokane regional champion.

"We were going out there to win, and that's exactly what we did is we beat Baylor and we beat Tennessee," said Schimmel, the regional's most outstanding player, "and now we're going to the Final Four."

Taber Spani led the Lady Vols with 20 points, and Meighan Simmons and Kamiko Williams chipped in 12 apiece. Tennessee headed home with a third straight loss in the regional finals, failing to make the Final Four for a fifth straight year.

Louisville joins the school's men's team in the national semifinals, marking the 10th time that a program had both teams make it

that far. Only Connecticut has won both titles in the same season, in 2004.

The Cardinals' only other Final Four trip was in 2009 behind Angel McCoughtry and ended in a loss to Big East rival Connecticut in the championship game. Tennessee was trying to add to its NCAA-record 18 Final Four trips.

"Hate it or love it, the underdogs are on top," said Monique Reid, who hit the clinching free throws to beat Baylor on Sunday night. "It's crazy. Nobody believed in us, but we believed in ourselves. The world's going to know our name now. It's an amazing feeling."

Walz showed his players the documentary on North Carolina State's 1983 team that made perhaps the most notable Cinderella run to the men's championship and footage of Muhammad Ali to try and inspire them. He also took them to Ali's center in Louisville.

"Because no one believed that

we could win, I just kept telling them we're playing with house money, people. I mean, if we win, hey, it's one more to chalk up. If we lose, everybody's going to say, 'I told you so.' So, who cares? And that's how they approached it."

Louisville rode a hefty rebounding advantage and another solid 3-point shooting outing — especially when compared to Tennessee's 0-for-9 start — to take a 49-29 edge 90 seconds after half-time following back-to-back 3s from Antonita Slaughter and Shoni Schimmel. That same tandem combined for 12 of the Cardinals' 16 treys, matching the tournament record, in the epic upset of Baylor.

Spani finally broke Tennessee's 3-point drought right after that, and the Lady Vols were able to chip away at the 20-point deficit. Their full-court pressure, which wasn't tight enough to prevent over-the-top passes for layups in the first half, started to be effective.

Tennessee gave up just one basket over an 8-minute span, and Williams' short jumper at the end of an 18-6 rally got the Lady Vols as close as 68-65 with 4:28 remaining. Spani missed a 3-pointer from the right wing that would have tied it on the next possession, and Tennessee's comeback fizzled after that.

Shoni Schimmel had a pair of driving layups and Jude Schimmel hit a 3-pointer and set up Slaughter for a reverse layup in a 9-3 burst for Louisville. Even when Simmons, who started out 1 for 22 in the two games in Oklahoma City, hit three late 3-pointers, it wasn't enough for Tennessee.

"We thought we had a good year, but we didn't have a great year. That's just the nature of our program and our expectations," said Holly Warlick, the longtime assistant in her first season replacing NCAA wins leader Pat Summitt as coach.

"Whether you're Pat Summitt or myself, it's just what we're all about. It's in our blood. It's in our make-up."

## Twitter Reaction

**Jay Hicks (@jayfhicks)** - Griner is crying so hard her voice can barely be heard on the first reporter questions.

**Robert Griffin III (@RGIII)** - People poke and make fun of B. Griner all the time but C'MON MAN....Them girls were LITERALLY throwing elbows, slaps, weave....

**Jemele Hill (@jemelehill)** - No question, Baylor losing is THEE biggest upset of either tournament.

**Stuart Scott (@StuartScott)** - You won't find a more compelling game than Louisville/Baylor!! An unreal emotional physical battle!! Props to both.

**Trey Wingo (@Wingoz)** - Baylor, we are. Forever proud of @Brittney4Griner and @KimMulkey



# An era ends.



No. 0 point guard Odyssey Sims moves the ball down the court during the game against TCU on Feb. 16 in the Ferrell Center. The Lady Bears beat the Horned Frogs 78-45.



No. 10 forward Destiny Williams maneuvers in the paint during the NCAA matchup against Prairie View A&M on March 24 in the Ferrell Center. The Lady Bears dominated the Panthers 82-40.



No. 32 forward Brooklyn Pope shoots for two points during the game against OSU in the Ferrell Center on Jan. 6. Pope led the Lady Bears in their 83-49 victory over the Cowgirls with 18 points.

**Despite a one-loss season and being the No. 1 seed, the Lady Bears fell short of a second-consecutive National Title. And thus ends the Griner Era.**



Head coach Kim Mulkey shouts out plays during the NCAA match-up against Florida State University at the Ferrell Center on March 26. The Lady Bears upset the Seminoles 85-47, advancing to play against Louisville at the Sweet Sixteen.






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