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
The Bears went 23-11 this season, finishing 14-4 in the conference and reaching their first NCAA Tournament, highest seed in program history (12) and highest finish in Big 12 play (2nd). A season that started with questions and uncertainty ended with championship hardware and a NIT berth.

The Bears were an eight seed (Baylor is 22-12 all-time as an eight seed and advanced to the second round on five occasions) and a No. 15 seed of ESPN’s so-called “experts” who just didn’t live up to expectations this year. After all, the NCAA tournament is supposed to be about the sport and not the numbers, especially if you’re in it with a Cinderella team and a basketball on a court.

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 who enjoy talking about it.

Considering the Bears’ lofty pre-season ranking of No. 19 in the country, it was difficult to feel as though this season was anything but a success.

Sure, it’s fantastic for head coach Scott Drew and senior Pierre Jackson to go out on top and for the success of Cory Jefferson in his final season. Even though it’s tough when you’re assessed in terms of the NCAA tournament, the Bears were the worst team to miss out on the NCAA tournament this season.

But the Bears’ coaching staff and senior guard A.J. Walton had to settle for the secondary résumé for the Bears fell short of the NCAA tournament. The Bears had to settle for the second round after losing to Iowa State in the Big 12 tournament.

The Bears had a record of 5-1 against the AP Top 25 in conference play, including a 92-86 win over Iowa State and a record of 8-4 against teams that played honest defense and were not afraid to adjust to what they were doing. The Bears led the Big 12 in this regard.

The Bears have played the most basketball on a court.

The Bears’ coaching staff and senior guard A.J. Walton had to settle for the secondary résumé for the Bears fell short of the NCAA tournament. The Bears had to settle for the second round after losing to Iowa State in the Big 12 tournament.

Senior guard Pierre Jackson holds the NIT Most Outstanding Player trophy after helping the Bears lead Iowa 74-70 Thursday.

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Despite NT Championship, Baylor men underachieved.
Hoops

Men’s season recap

No. 21 center Isaiah Austin shoots the ball 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.

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.

No. 5 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.

Drew Mills | round up photographer

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

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

Matt Hillman | lariat photographer

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.

Matt Hillman | lariat photographer

During the Big 12 Tournament matchup against OSU on Thursday, Mar. 14, 2013, No. 2 forward Rico Gathers dunks the ball in the game against Hardin-Simmons on Jan. 19, 2013.

Monica Lake | Lariat photographer
Top-ranked Lady Bears fall short of expectations

By Jeff Latzke

FRIDAY | APRIL 5, 2013

Louisville women top Tennessee to punch ticket to New Orleans

By Doris Larson

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — James pregame chalk talk worked, with all the pressure that naturally accompanies a regional final in the NCAA tournament.

The Louisville coach wants his players to play fearless, play free and play with passion as the Cardinals defend their national championship.

That was exactly what happened Tuesday night.

Louisville hobbled Baylor 86-78 Tuesday night to earn their second straight appearance in the Final Four and punch their ticket to New Orleans.

For the second time in three years, the Cardinals were the first team to solve the Lady Bears.

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.

First, they took down Griner and the Baylor team that had last lost in 75 games. Then, it was the night's national championship Lady Volunteer.

Next up is a Sunday showdown in New Orleans against Duke, the Blue Devils, the defending NCAA champions.

Duke’s 28-8 record this season is the best in the country.

“Whether you're Pat Summitt or me, I'm just a coach. I'm just a number five seed,” Schimmel said. “It's in our blood. It's in our tradition. We can win a national championship. We can win a national championship. And we've done it before.”

Jeff Walz sees no reason to pile on the pressure on his 5-13 team for making the Final Four for a fifth straight year.

“Hate it or love it, the underdog is coming.”

It's in our blood. It's in our tradition.

With 9:35 left in the first half, the Cardinals went on a 16-2 run to turn a close game into a rout.

Baylor, which scored 1,600 points this season, had scored just 27 in the first half before the rout.

Tennessee coach Pat Summitt was out of her seat once Tennessee scored at the start of the second half and went on to beat Baylor.

“I was so proud of our team,” Summitt said. “I'm so proud of the crowd. I'm so proud of our team.”

An era ends.

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.
Join us for a Senior road trip to Independence, Texas, the place where Baylor began more than 165 years ago. Enjoy a BBQ dinner on the grounds, photos at sunset at the Independence columns and a pre-graduation celebration set amongst the rich history of the University.