

First Dance

Ragin' Cajuns® compete in NCAA Division 1 championship tournament



AARON LAMBERT

REALLY, YOU HAVE TO TAKE THIS FOR what it is. This team came from dirt. Nobody thought we'd make it here."

With that observation, UL Lafayette senior and leading scorer Yolanda Jones demonstrated that she can keep winning and losing in proper perspective. She made her comments to a reporter during first-round play in the 2007 NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship in March.

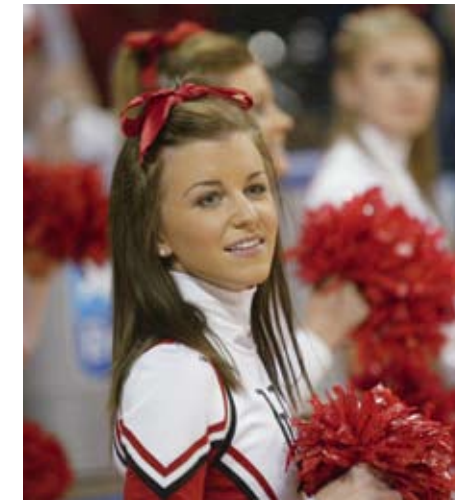
Louisiana's Ragin' Cajuns® were pitted against Marquette University's Golden Eagles. The Eagles prevailed, 87-58. But losing that one contest didn't diminish what the Cajuns had accomplished to get to the NCAA Dayton Regional in Austin, Texas.

- Consider this:
- It was the first time in the 36-year history of UL Lafayette's women's basketball program that the Ragin' Cajuns made it to *any* postseason play.
 - Going into the tournament, Marquette University was ranked No. 21 in the nation by *USA Today/ESPN* and No. 22 by Associated Press.

- This Ragin' Cajun team won the Western Division of the Sun Belt Conference for the second time in three years.
- UL Lafayette had more wins this season than any other women's basketball team in school history. Final season win-loss tally: 25-9. Five of those nine losses were to ranked teams.
- The Cajuns tied the school record for road victories, winning 13 away from home.
- UL Lafayette was one of 33 at-large selections for the 64-team NCAA tournament.
- Louisiana's Ragin' Cajuns drew a No. 11 seed in the NCAA tournament. Marquette was seeded No. 6.
- UL Lafayette was one of only nine schools making their first NCAA tournament appearance. Only two of those nine, Pittsburgh and Maryland, advanced to the second round; both lost there.
- UL Lafayette and Pittsburgh were the only at-large selections making their first appearance.



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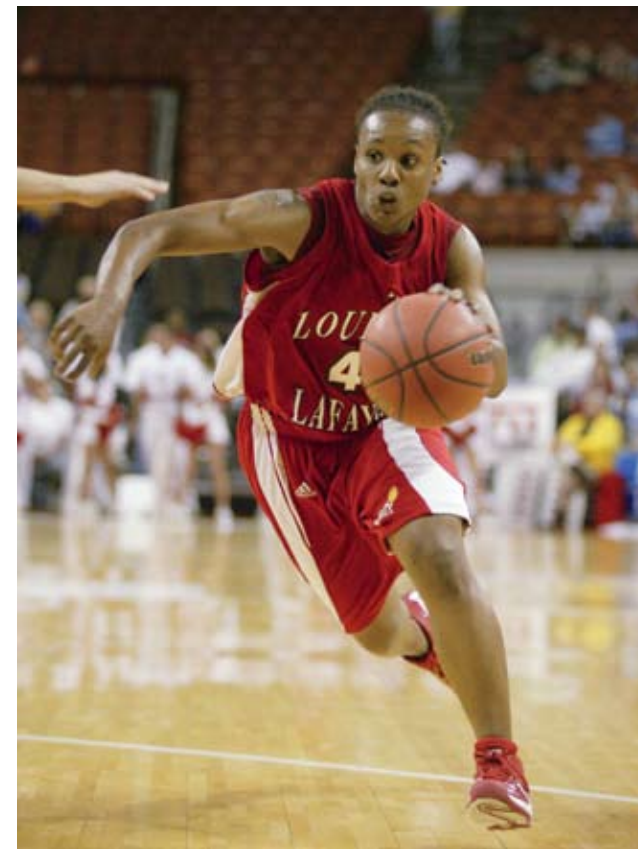
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TOP: Whitney Dunlap. CENTER ABOVE: Ragin' Cajun Brass Basketball Band member Wayne Dixon. ABOVE: Onna Charles. RIGHT: co-head coaches J. Kelley Hall and Meredith Hall with the team.

Although some basketball fans may not have expected Louisiana's Ragin' Cajuns to get an invitation to the tournament, co-head coach J. Kelley Hall was confident they would make the cut.

"There's only 22 teams out of 335 that have won more than us," he told a

CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT: Yolanda Jones; Ragin' Cajun cheerleader Kaelyn Hebert; Sonora Edwards; Alica McDaniel; and Jeanette Colbert.

sports writer for *The Advertiser*, Lafayette's daily newspaper, before the NCAA announced its championship teams. "We know we're going to be in a tournament and we've earned that right." ■