



PHOTO BY CHARLIE HEARD

The Bulldogs' four graduating seniors stand next to this year's championship trophy, the memento of their Bulldog's legacy.

Despite adversity, women's basketball win championship again

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Entering the tournament as the seventh seed, last year's Big South champions were not expected to repeat themselves by anyone, except themselves.

KJ Weaver, a senior center for the Bulldogs, said despite the team's record, its struggles with injuries this season and the doubt surrounding the reigning champs, the team never considered itself out of the running.

"Entering the tournament, it wasn't a 'we can do it' attitude in the locker room," Weaver said. "For us, winning was the expectation."

In Big South history, no women's team has won as the seventh seed in the end of the year tournament. The tournament is four days long, with seeds

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one through six getting a bye through the first day, so the Bulldogs came into the tournament knowing they had to win four games in four days to defend their title.

Head Coach Brenda “Mock” Kirk-

patrick said the team's high regard for themselves allowed them to reject self-defeat by not identifying as a true seventh seed. The team's self confidence was really high going into the tournament, Kirkpatrick said.

"We felt like we were that number one team. We acted like we were the number one team like we were last year," Kirkpatrick said.

Kirkpatrick said though winning four games straight is an accomplishment, anyone who knows the team well knew the team was a true contender.

"We weren't a typical seventh seed," Kirkpatrick said. "It is remarkable that we won four games in four days but if you know our team, the talent we have, it's not as shocking as people think who don't know the whole story."

Coach Kirkpatrick said she has had many talks with the team throughout

the season to redirect them through this season's hefty allotment of adversity.

"We had to reframe our season a couple of times. There was a rough moment when we lost two seniors in back-to-back weekends and then the day before a game with Gardner-Webb, we lost Khaila Webb, who was our top scorer at the time, to a pretty serious ankle injury," Kirkpatrick said. "I had talks with them after a lot of games, never the same talk though. After the win over Winthrop, we talked about how we could not settle for that level of play so late in the season and that we knew we could be better."

Weaver said during that talk after the Winthrop win, Kirkpatrick shocked the girls with a humbling outlook of the upcoming championship.

"What stuck in my mind from that

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