



Let's dance

Vandals make NCAA Tournament, will go to Big Dance for first time since 1985

Sean Kramer
Argonaut

In a city that was built on the odds being stacked against you, Idaho women's basketball coach Jon Newlee liked the odds he was given.

The 2012-13 season had thrown everything at him and his team. Blowout losses, agonizing losses at the buzzer, a string of success in the middle of the season — you name it, Newlee's players have gone through it.

Sitting at 11-7 in the WAC and seeded No. 3, the Vandal women came into Vegas knowing what their mission was and knowing what it would take to achieve it.

They just had to create their own luck.

That luck was created Saturday afternoon at the Orleans Arena and became reality when Newlee made the final cut to the net, putting it around his neck in celebration — the Idaho Vandals became 2013 Western Athletic Conference champions, defeating Seattle University 67-64.

"I was just thinking back when I told these guys ... that our luck was going to change in Vegas when it came to those end of game situations," Newlee said. "We're letting 'em ride, we're still good to go, we got one last shot and we got this."

The win clinches Idaho's first NCAA Tournament berth since 1985 and first championship for any Idaho team sport since joining the Western

More info

For more WAC Tournament coverage, turn to sports page 6 or go online to thevandalnation.com.

Athletic Conference in 2005.

"I just want everybody in Moscow and all Vandals everywhere to be proud of this team because these girls worked really hard to get where they are right now," he said.

Work hard they did.

On December 20, the women rode back from Spokane sitting at 3-8 — Gonzaga had run them out of the gym 97-62.

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Photos by Theo Lawson | Argonaut

Top: Coach Jon Newlee hoists the WAC Championship trophy above the heads of his players who won Idaho's first conference championship since 1985. Bottom: Connie Ballestero cuts down her piece of the net after the Vandals upset No. 1 seeded Seattle U in the WAC Tournament championship game.

Idaho sent east, will meet UConn Huskies

ESPN's Women's NCAA Tournament selection show reveals No. 16 Idaho to play No. 1 seed UConn in Round of 64 teams

Sean Kramer
Argonaut

The crowd of players, coaches, and fans went crazy as soon as the word "Idaho" flashed on the projector screen of ESPN's Women's NCAA Tournament selection show. Fans discovered the selection committee will send Idaho to the east coast to play a team which has made the Final Four each of the last five years — the Vandals were in and that in itself is an accomplishment.

Idaho is a No. 16 seed and will play at No. 1 seeded Connecticut Saturday at 10:30 a.m. PST in Storrs, Conn.

"You know what we've been up for challenges all year long so we'll go

back and watch film on UConn... they

won't be a surprise for us, we might be a surprise to them from that standpoint," Idaho coach Jon Newlee said. "We knew we'd have to play a pretty high seed, didn't know how high it was going to be, I'm sure our players are ready for the challenge."

UConn was built into a college bas-



ketball dynasty by

Hall of Fame coach Geno Auriemma. The Huskies have participated in the NCAA Tournament every season since 1988 and haven't lost a first round game since 1993. Don't forget the seven national championships since 1995.

"Everybody already pen-

ciled UConn in the second round I'm sure, our players have to go out and have fun, it's a fantastic opportunity," Newlee said. "(It) may be a once in a lifetime opportunity for them, so they just need to embrace that, embrace that role of going out there of having fun and playing basketball."

A No. 16 seed hasn't won a tournament game since 1998, when Harvard defeated Stanford. Most anticipated the Vandals would get sent to Palo Alto, Calif., to play the Cardinal, but oohs and ahs filled the room when Tulsa was the announced No. 16 seed in the Spokane region.

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Tuition increase still unclear

Kaitlyn Krasselt
Argonaut

University of Idaho administrators announced they will ask the Idaho State Board of Education for up to a 6 percent increase for undergraduate tuition for the 2013-2014 academic year.

Keith Ickes, UI executive director of planning and budget, said 6 percent is the most the university could ask for now that they have released an official proposal.

"We proposed 6 percent because when we send out this

proposal, that sets the highest value we can ask for," Ickes said. "Once we make this announcement to campus we can't then find out that things have changed or that the board made a change and then come back later and say 'whoops, we're going to make it higher.'"

The university is required by the state board to release an official tuition proposal prior to the April state board meeting to set fees for all universities in the state, Ickes said.

This is the first year Idaho administrators have not known

exactly how much they will ask for at the meeting. When the proposal was made public the week before spring break, the Idaho Legislature had yet to decide how much money they would designate for higher education funding.

"The reason we did that this year as opposed to a specific target was because things were unsettled," Ickes said. "The legislature hadn't made a decision about higher education funding."

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JFAC approves 4.4 percent increase for higher education funding

Emily Johnson
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The Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee approved a budget plan March 7 that will give Idaho colleges and universities a 4.4-percent funding increase for FY 2014.

Idaho higher education will receive a total of \$465.9 million for FY 2014 if approved by the full Idaho house, Senate and the governor in the coming weeks. It will add an additional \$236.5 million, or 3.2 percent increase, to the general funds budget.

Paul Headlee, principal budget analyst for public schools and higher education, said the current FY 2013 appropriation is comprised of 51 percent general funds, 47 percent tuition and fees and 2 percent endowment funds.

"This appropriation comprises approximately one-third of the total operating budgets, both appropriated and non appropriated," Headlee said. "Which includes non-appropriated federal financial aid dollars, grants,

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New Mexico State slammed the Idaho men in the first round of the WAC Tournament.

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WAC Championship is a source of pride for all Vandals — read Our View.

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