

51st Annual Louisiana Association of Basketball Coaches Awards Banquet

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Baton Rouge Marriott
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

BATON ROUGE, LA --- Two prolific scorers from New Orleans, a superb floor general from Lafayette and a legendary high school coach from Alexandria were the major honorees at Saturday's 51st Annual Louisiana Association of Basketball Coaches Awards Banquet.

Inducted into the Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame were former University of New Orleans stars Ledell Eackles and Bo McCalebb, along with former University of Louisiana at Lafayette star Elfrid Payton

Long-time Peabody Magnet High School coach Charles Smith received the LABC's Mr. Louisiana Basketball award. This award is given annually to someone who has made a significant, long-term contribution to the game of basketball at any level in the State of Louisiana.

Also honored at the banquet were Louisiana's major college, small college, junior college and high school basketball players and coaches of the year, along with the top pro player from the state.

Eackles played at the University of New Orleans from 1986 to 1988, where he was a two-time honorable mention All-American, the Louisiana Player of the Year and Newcomer of the Year in 1987 and the American South Conference Player of the Year in 1988. He finished his two-year career as the third leading scorer in UNO history with 1,358 points for a 23.0 average. He shot 35.2% behind the three-point line and 77.6% from the charity stripe for his career. He averaged 23.4 points (1st in ASC) in 1988 and 22.6 points in 1987

Eackles led UNO to a top 20 national ranking and the school's only NCAA Division I Tournament win in 1987, and then followed that up with an American South Conference championship and a NIT appearance in 1988.

After college he was selected by the Washington Bullets in the second round of the 1988 NBA Draft and played professionally for seven seasons.

McCalebb played at the University of New Orleans from 2003 to 2008, where he was an honorable mention AP All-American in 2007 and a CollegeInsider Mid-Major All-American in 2008, as well as a two-time Louisiana Player of the Year and four-time All-Louisiana selection. He was also a Sun Belt Conference Player of the Year, Defensive Player of the Year, Freshman of the Year and Tournament Most Outstanding Player, in addition to being a three-time first team All-Sun Belt selection.

He finished his career as the leading scorer in UNO and Sun Belt Conference history (and ranked 21st in NCAA Division I history), with 2,679 points for a 20.9 average. He also had a

school record 250 steals for a 1.95 average. He led the Sun Belt Conference and finished in the top ten in the nation in scoring three different seasons (23.2 ppg in 2008, 25.0 ppg in 2007 and 22.6 ppg in 2005), while also leading the Sun Belt in steals twice.

After college, McCalebb's pro basketball career took him all over the world, where he had great success playing in places like Turkey, Serbia, Italy, Germany, France and Spain. He was also a part of Macedonia's national team, where he became that nation's fifth all-team leading scorer.

Payton played at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette from 2011 to 2014, where he was the Louisiana Player of the Year, the CollegeInsider National Defensive Player of the Year and a CollegeInsider Mid-Major All-American in 2014. He was also a two-time first team All-Sun Belt Conference and NABC All-District selection, as well as a two-time All-Louisiana pick.

He finished his three-year career as the Ragin Cajuns' all-time steals leader and fifth in career assists. He also scored 1,425 career points and had 508 career rebounds. He led the Sun Belt Conference in both assists and steals for two straight seasons. During his final season he averaged a career-best 19.2 points, 6.0 rebounds, 5.94 assists and 2.29 steals.

Following college Payton was the 10th player selected in the first round of the 2014 NBA Draft. Since then he has played in over 500 NBA games for six different teams, with over 400 career starts, finishing this past season with the New Orleans Pelicans. One of the highlights of his professional career occurred back in 2019, when he became only the fifth player in NBA history to record a triple-double in five consecutive games.

Smith has been the head coach at Peabody Magnet High School in Alexandria for 40 years, where he has won over 1,200 games and nine state championships. He is Louisiana's all-time winningest high school head coach and ranks fourth nationally. He is now within reach of becoming the nation's all-time winningest prep basketball coach.

Smith's 1,236-219 career record and 84.9% winning percentage include a pair of perfect 41-0 seasons (in 2004 and 2010), with his 2004 team earning a national top five ranking.

He is a six-time Louisiana state coach of the year and was the ESPN National Coach of the Year in 2010. However, his greatest individual coaching honor came in October, when he was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts, becoming only the sixth high school coach to be so honored and the first one from Louisiana.

The LABC also presented the Pete Maravich Memorial Award, honoring Louisiana's Major College Player of the Year, to senior guard Javohn Garcia of McNeese State. This season Garcia was the Southland Conference Player of the Year and a finalist for the Lou Henson Award as the mid-major national player of the year, as well as the Most Valuable Player of the SLC Tournament. He averaged 12.6 points, 3.4 rebounds and 1.54 steals and had a 35.4% three-point field goal percentage and an 80.9% free throw percentage (1st in SLC). His single game highs were 26 points, 8 rebounds, 4 steals, 4 three-point field goals made and 3 blocked shots.

Coach Will Wade of McNeese State received the Tommy Joe Eagles Memorial Award as Louisiana's Major College Coach of the Year. He led the Cowboys to the Southland Conference regular season and tournament championships and to the second round of the NCAA Tournament with a 28-7 record, which included the school's first-ever NCAA Tournament win. Wade was named the SLC Coach of the Year and was a finalist for the Hugh Durham Award as the mid-major national coach of the year.

Senior guard Kashie Natt of LSU-Alexandria received the Louisiana Small College Player of the Year award after being named the NAIA National Player of the Year and a finalist for the Bevo Francis Award as the national small college player of the year. He was also the Red River Athletic Conference Player of the Year and Defensive Player of the Year, as well as the MVP of the RRAC Tournament, while averaging 20.0 points and 10.3 rebounds (1st in RRAC), including 19 double-double games.

Coach Dimario Jackson of LSU-Alexandria, who was named the Louisiana Small College Coach of the Year, guided the Generals to a No. 2 ranking in the final regular season national poll, to the Red River Athletic Conference regular season and tournament championships and to the quarterfinals of the NAIA National Tournament with a 31-3 record. Jackson was also named the RRAC Coach of the Year.

Kialen Phillips and Coach Byron Starks of Baton Rouge were honored as the Louisiana Junior College Player and Coach of the Year, respectively. Phillips, a sophomore guard, averaged 16.7 points and 6.3 rebounds and had an 85.2% free throw percentage, while earning Louisiana Community Colleges Athletic Conference Player of the Year and NJCAA Region 23 All-Region honors. Starks led the Bears to the LCCAC championship and the quarterfinals of the NJCAA Region 23 Tournament with a 20-9 record, while being named the LCCAC Coach of the Year. This is the sixth straight year that Starks has received this award.

The Bob Pettit Award, which is given to Louisiana's Professional Player of the Year, was presented to center-forward Naz Reid of the Minnesota Timberwolves. In his sixth year in the NBA, the former LSU star averaged 14.2 points and 6.0 rebounds and had a 37.9% three-point field goal percentage. He had 10 double-double games, nineteen 20+ point games and thirteen 10+ rebound games, along with single game highs of 30 points, 14 rebounds, 7 assists, 6 three-point field goals made and 4 blocked shots.

2025 LABC Honorees:

Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame Inductees: Ledell Eackles, New Orleans; Bo McCalebb, New Orleans; Elfrid Payton, UL-Lafayette

Mr. Louisiana Basketball: Charles Smith, Peabody

Bob Pettit Award for the Louisiana Professional Player of the Year: Naz Reid, Minnesota Timberwolves

Pete Maravich Memorial Award for the Louisiana Major College Player of the Year: Javohn Garcia, McNeese St.

Tommy Joe Eagles Memorial Award for the Louisiana Major College Coach of the Year: Will Wade, McNeese St.

Louisiana Small College Player of the Year: Kashie Natt, LSU-Alexandria

Louisiana Small College Coach of the Year: Dimario Jackson, LSU-Alexandria

Louisiana Junior College Player of the Year: Kialen Phillips, Baton Rouge

Louisiana Junior College Coach of the Year: Byron Starks, Baton Rouge

Louisiana High School Players of the Year:

Class AAAAA: Ahmad Hudson, Ruston

Class AAAA: Drew Timmons, Hannan

Class AAA: LaVell Lane, Richwood

Class AA: Tyrone Jamison, Calvary Baptist

Class A: Javon Vital, Hamilton Christian

Class B: Kane Broussard, Lacassine

Class C: Zequan Lewis, Plainview

Louisiana High School Coaches of the Year:

Class AAAAA: Wade Mason, St. Augustine

Class AAAA: Casey Jones, Wossman

Class AAA: Terry Martin, Richwood

Class AA: Mike McGuire, Metairie Park Country Day

Class A: Dexter Washington, Hamilton Christian

Class B: Micah Rasberry, Lacassine

Class C: Dustin Howard, Plainview