

45th Annual Louisiana Association of Basketball Coaches Awards Banquet

May 4, 2019
Embassy Suites Hotel
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

BATON ROUGE --- A homegrown star who led his school to a conference championship, along with a pioneering AAU coach and promoter, were the major honorees at Saturday's 45th Annual Louisiana Association of Basketball Coaches Awards Banquet.

Inducted into the Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame was former Louisiana Tech University star Lonnie Cooper of Tallulah, Louisiana.

The other major honoree was long-time AAU, college and youth coach and organizer Jim Champagne, who 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.

Cooper played at Louisiana Tech from 1995 to 1999, where he was a three-time All-Sun Belt Conference, All-Louisiana and NABC All-District selection, as well as the Louisiana Player of the Year in 1999 when he led the Bulldogs to the SBC championship.

He finished his career as the leading three-point shooter (219 made) and second in assists (5.03 average) in Louisiana Tech history, in addition to scoring 1,451 points for a 14.0 average and leading the nation with a 92.1% free throw percentage in 1999. He averaged 13.7 points and 5.44 assists in 1999, 17.0 points and 5.15 assists in 1998, 14.2 points and 5.11 assists in 1997, and 10.5 points and 4.38 assists in 1996.

Champagne has been involved in coaching and promoting basketball for over 40 years. He has helped hundreds of kids in Louisiana get college opportunities and an education through his selfless work in AAU basketball at the local, state and national levels.

As a strong supporter of basketball in Louisiana at all levels, Champagne has contributed to the development of many players in this state who went on to play in college, including several who played professionally. Additionally, many of them have become successful college, junior college and high school coaches, including both of his own sons. His AAU teams won several state championships and, in 1991, his Louisiana Stars AAU teams won the 16U national championship and were the 17U national runner-up.

The LABC also presented the Pete Maravich Memorial Award, honoring Louisiana's Major College Player of the Year, to sophomore guard Tremont Waters of LSU. This season Waters was an honorable mention Associated Press All-American, the Southeastern Conference Co-Defensive Player of the Year and a finalist for the Bob Cousy Award as the national point guard of the year. He averaged 15.3 points and an SEC-leading 5.82 assists and 2.91 steals. He led LSU to a No. 12 ranking in the final regular season national polls, to the SEC championship and to the regional semifinals of the NCAA Tournament with a 28-7 record.

Coach Mark Slessinger of New Orleans received the Tommy Joe Eagles Memorial Award as Louisiana's Major College Coach of the Year. He led the Privateers to the finals of the Southland Conference Tournament and to the CollegeInsider.com Tournament with a 19-14 record. This is the second time in three seasons that Slessinger has received this award.

The Bob Pettit Award, which is given to Louisiana's Professional Player of the Year, was presented to guard-forward Ben Simmons of the Philadelphia 76ers. In his second year in the NBA, the former LSU star averaged 16.9 points, 8.8 rebounds, 7.7 assists and 1.4 steals. Simmons had 10 triple-double games and 42 double-double games, along with single game highs of 29 points, 22 rebounds, 15 assists, 5 steals and 3 blocked shots. He participated in the 2019 NBA All-Star Game, scoring 10 points, issuing 7 assists and grabbing 6 rebounds.

Senior forward Jeff Garrett of LSU-Shreveport 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, Defensive Player of the Year and Newcomer of the Year, while averaging 18.8 points and leading the nation in rebounding (14.1) and double-doubles (26).

Coach Stacy Hollowell of Loyola, who was named the Louisiana Small College Coach of the Year, directed the Wolf Pack to the Southern States Athletic Conference Tournament championship and to the second round of the NAIA National Tournament with a 22-12 record. This was Loyola's first SSAC championship and was the first time since 1946 that it reached the second round of the NAIA National Tournament.

Eric Parrish and Coach Chris Lovell of Bossier Parish were honored as the Louisiana Junior College Player and Coach of the Year, respectively. Parrish, a sophomore forward, averaged 18.4 points, 8.7 rebounds and 6.4 assists and was a first team NJCAA Region XIV All-Region selection. Lovell led Bossier Parish to the NJCAA Region 14 Tournament with a 19-12 record, which was the school's most wins and best record since 2007 and included its first Top 25 national ranking in over two decades.

2019 LABC Honorees:

Louisiana Basketball Hall of Fame Inductee: Lonnie Cooper, Louisiana Tech

Mr. Louisiana Basketball: Jim Champagne, Lafayette, Louisiana

Bob Pettit Award for the Louisiana Professional Player of the Year: Ben Simmons, Philadelphia 76ers

Pete Maravich Memorial Award for the Louisiana Major College Player of the Year: Tremont Waters, LSU

Tommy Joe Eagles Memorial Award for the Louisiana Major College Coach of the Year: Mark Slessinger, New Orleans

Louisiana Small College Player of the Year: Jeff Garrett, LSU-Shreveport

Louisiana Small College Coach of the Year: Stacy Hollowell, Loyola

Louisiana Junior College Player of the Year: Eric Parrish, Bossier Parish

Louisiana Junior College Coach of the Year: Chris Lovell, Bossier Parish

Louisiana High School Players of the Year:

Class AAAAA: Jalen Cook, Walker

Class AAAA: Jacoby Decker, Bossier

Class AAA: Jahein Spencer, Madison Prep

Class AA: Mylik Wilson, Rayville

Class A: Chanse Robinson, Lincoln Prep

Class B: Garrett Edwards, Pitkin

Class C: Jaron Davis, Jehovah-Jireh

Louisiana High School Coaches of the Year:

Class AAAAA: Tony Clark, Thibodaux

Class AAAA: Chad Pourciau, Breaux Bridge

Class AAA: Jeff Jones, Madison Prep

Class AA: Mike McGuire, Metairie Park Country Day

Class A: Apphia Jordan, North Central

Class B: Ryan Bond, Weston

Class C: Jade Losavio, Simpson