

## ***UTSA wins first-ever Southland Conference Championship on Saturday***

KATY — The UTSA women's basketball team is going NCAA Tournament dancing for the first in school history after defeating Lamar, 65–56, in the 2008 Southland Conference championship game on Saturday at the Merrell Center.

Senior forward Amanda Foster posted her second double-double of the season with 16 points and 13 rebounds for the Roadrunners (23–9), while junior guard Monica Gibbs, who was named the SLC Tournament MVP, collected her 22nd career double-double with 14 points and 12 boards. Senior guard Terrie Davis, named to the SLC All-Tournament Team, chipped in with 15 points on the strength of five 3-pointers, including four in the first half. Junior Onika Anderson collected All-Tournament honors.

"We played a great game today." head coach Rae Rippetoe-Blair said after winning the first SLC title of her eight-year tenure in the Alamo City. "Amanda, Monica and Terrie had their best games of the season and I am so proud of them. They showed up and got us this victory."

It wasn't easy, though, as Lamar came out firing with a 14–3 run led by Tamara Abalde and Brittney Williams to cut the lead 41–31 in the first five minutes of the second half. UTSA then pushed its lead back to 16 courtesy of a 6–0 spurt over the next three minutes. The Lady Cardinals again pulled within 10 on Abalde's jumper from the free throw line and Trashanna Smith then drained 1-of-2 free throws to pull Lamar within eight at the four-minute mark. A pair of freebies by Abalde cut UTSA's lead to six with a minute to play, but it would be the closest the Lady Cardinals would get the rest of the way. The Roadrunners made 8-of-10 from the charity stripe in the final minute to clinch their first-ever SLC Tournament Championship.

Abalde led the Lady Cardinals (19–13) with a game-high 20 points, while Nikki Williams added 16.

Foster's 3-pointer from the left wing put UTSA up 13–4 with 15:19 to go in the first half. Lamar closed the gap to eight when Jasmine

Stewart was good on a free throw midway through the frame. Davis' fourth triple of the stanza capped a 12-0 Roadrunners' run with seven minutes to play in the half. Abalde ended a Lady Cardinals four-minute scoreless drought with a layup two minutes later, but freshman guard Amber Gregg gave UTSA its largest lead of the of the game at 38-17 with a driving layup as the clock expired.

The NCAA Women's Tournament matchups will be announced on ESPN from 6-7 p.m. on Monday.