

ASU Women are No.1

Written by Mike Kelly
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The Appalachian State women's basketball team marched its way to the Women's Basketball Invitational championship Sunday afternoon at the Holmes Center.

ASU (23-12), which finished the season winning nine of its last 11 games, defeated Memphis 79-71 in the title game. And the Mountaineers wiped out a 19-point first half deficit to clinch the title. Ashlen Dewert led the way with 21 points. She was 7-12 from the field; Anna Freeman turned in another stellar effort with 13 points, nine boards and seven blocked shots.

"Our goal is to play a physical brand of basketball," said ASU coach Darcey Vincent. "We are honored to be playing in this tournament, and it was an honor to be crowned as a No.1 seed."

And the Apps lived up to their billing as they marched their way through the field. The final hurdle came Sunday afternoon against Memphis (20-14), a Conference USA team, in the championship game. But the Mountaineers had some anxious moments early on.

Memphis built an early 9-2 lead, and led 23-10 before ASU put together a 20-4 run to close out the first half, cutting a 19-point margin down to three at 40-37.

From there, the Apps took complete control of the game.

"I give Appalachian a lot of credit," said Memphis coach Melissa McFerrin. "We easily broke their pressure, but they never backed down. That tells you they are playing with a lot of confidence."

ASU outrebounded Memphis 43-39, and the Mountaineers forced Memphis into 23 turnovers.

"Beating Memphis is huge for our program," Vincent said. "And this tournament was great for our players. It gave them a taste of what post-season play is all about. And winning this tournament is going to play a huge role for us going into next season."