

# SPORTS

## UConn Brings Home a Championship

### Guard Napier turns in masterpiece performance

(AP) -- Shabazz Napier walked slowly through the hallway of the stadium in Arlington, Texas - the tears still drying, the twine from the cut-down net still hanging around his neck.

"Bittersweet. Bittersweet. Bittersweet," he said, over and over again. Bitter because it's over. Sweet because UConn won it all after being left behind and told to go away.

Napier turned in one final masterpiece as a college player Monday night, lifting the Huskies to a 60-54 win over Kentucky's freshmen and bringing home a championship hardly anyone not wearing a UConn uniform thought was possible.

"It's unbelievable because those guys, my players, stayed with the program," coach Kevin Ollie said.

Led by 22 points from Napier, 14 points from Ryan Boatright and strong defensive games from both, the Huskies (32-8) won it all a short year after they were barred from March Madness because of academic problems. That triggered the departure of five players, and coach Jim Calhoun left because of health concerns.

For those who remained, it stoked a fire no one could put out.


"You're looking at the hungry Huskies," Napier told the crowd and TV audience as confetti rained down. "Ladies and gentlemen, this is what happens when you banned us."

UConn never trailed in the final. The Huskies led by as many as 15 in the first half and watched the Wildcats (29-11) trim the deficit to one with 8:13 left. But Aaron Harrison, who pulled out wins with clutch 3-pointers in Kentucky's last three games, missed a 3 from the left corner that would've given the Cats the lead. Kentucky never got that close again.

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Connecticut celebrates with the championship trophy after beating Kentucky 60-54 at the NCAA Final Four tournament college basketball championship game Monday, April 7, 2014, in Arlington, Texas. (AP photo)

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