Goodbye to Top 28

Tourney ends Lafayette run — for now

Nicholas Persac
npersac@theadvertiser.com

High School basketball teams from across the state have been pounding the floorboards in the Cajundome since Wednesday, competing for a title just as the past 14 years worth of state champion teams have done.

This year’s tournament, the 15th consecutive Louisiana High School Athletic Association boy’s Top 28 Tournament held in Lafayette, will be the last such tournament in the Hub City for at least two years.

“Let’s keep the tournament going around the state rather than locking into one location,” said Mary Ann Tice, executive director and CAO of the Shreveport Regional Sports Authority, which offered LHSAA a more financially appealing bid to host the tournament than Lafayette was able to. Shreveport will host the tournament for the next two seasons.

Organizers here feel slighted, saying LHSAA didn’t fully recognize the cumulative product of many small efforts to host a premier high school tournament.

And the thousands of

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Denny Culbert/dculbert@theadvertiser.com

Gerald Hebert has been the event organizer for the LHSAA Top 28 since the tournament came to Lafayette in 1997.

“Twenty-five years from now, people are going to say, ‘Remember how good it was when it was in Lafayette?’”

— Rusty Cloutier, bluecoat volunteer
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people who came here every year will no longer pump millions of dollars into the economy leaving a void in local business and as tournament organizers.

A more appealing bid
Gerald Herbert, commissioner of athletic development for UF, had the idea of hosting a tournament in Tallahassee. The Gators would be considered a serious candidate for hosting the tournament.

"We're interested in hosting the tournament," Herbert said. "It would be a tremendous boost for our tennis program."

Herbert also said that his office is considering the possibility of hosting the tournament in Tallahassee.

"We're looking into it," Herbert said. "It would be a great opportunity for our program."