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ASHEBORO - Throughout the course of a long high school basketball season there are numerous opportunities to learn lessons. There are plenty that can be learned through a positive stretch of games, perhaps even a tournament championship. But there are also valuable lessons that can be learned when suffering a tough-to-take setback as well.

The Southwestern Randolph High School girls varsity basketball team first learned some valuable lessons from winning the Davidson-Randolph Christmas Classic with a victory over previously undefeated Randleman, which hadn't lost to another Piedmont Athletic Conference foe since February of 2021. The Cougars captured their first D-RCC championship with a thrilling 48-47 win over the Tigers, proving they could indeed compete with one of the top teams in the region.

Now, SWR coach Seth Baxter is hoping his team learns even more lessons after the Cougars returned to PAC action last week with a comeback win over Eastern Randolph and a stunning 52-43 setback to Wheatmore, which entered the game winless in league play at 0-3.



The Cougars following their championship win in the Davidson-Randolph Christmas Classic, Photo provided.



"They learned they could play with anyone after the win over Randleman, and now we're on the flip side of that," SWR coach Seth Baxter said. "Maybe we went under the radar a little bit the first time through the conference, but you have to come ready to play every game."

Earlier in the week, the Cougars were down by 15 points to Eastern Randolph before rallying for the league victory. There was no rally against the Warriors.

"I'm wishing that's a little bit of a wake up call," Baxter said. "We came out flat against Wheatmore and they played extremely hard and hustled. As great as

beating Randleman in the championship and getting that, in this life you are always remembered for what you did last."



Cougar seniors Maddie Small (24) and Alley Grace Lowe (11). Photos provided.

What the Cougars must avoid now is having that upset loss linger and with more than half of the roster consisting of underclassmen and a tough league game Tuesday at Uwharrie Charter Academy, how the team responds is unknown.

"The Wheatmore game is over, we can be disappointed, but we have to learn lessons," Baxter said. "This conference is tough and we have shown we are at the top level. But, if we don't show up, we can be beat by anyone at any time. You have to compete and play hard for 32 minutes every game."

It won't take long to find out if the Cougars did indeed learn that lesson.