

Jim Barnes Journal

March 14, 2019

College Tournaments Definitely have an Impact on Final Four Selections

In the lower level of Division-I teams might win their conference and still miss being named to the NCAA expanded Final Four field of 68.

Belmont is 26-5 in the regular season and 16-2 to capture the Ohio Valley title. In the tournament playoff, the Bruins were upset by Murray State, 77-65.

In the eyes of some this moves Belmont to a bubble position but most experts contend the school should be included in the NCAA championship field.

During the regular season Belmont downed UCLA on the road 74-72 and won its first six games before losing at UW Green Bay 100-92 on the road. Belmont also

Belmont definitely should be included in the Final Four tourney.



won 14 straight in mid-season.

If a school is housed in one of the major conferences, even a bland .500 record can propel it to the nation's most watched college basketball event.

If case you ever thought about watching a high profile game it will cost you more than \$1,500 per seat; chances of even seeing the court is like viewing an ant farm.

Virginia coach Tony Bennett (no, not the aging singer) has the most pressure of any mentor in the post-season.

The Cavaliers, for the second straight year, are high in the minds of a few experts to take it all.

Bennett beat ACC No. 2 seed North Carolina twice and shares the league crown with the Tar Heels.

A year ago, then No. 1 seed in the Final Four Virginia became the first top ranked team to disappear, falling in the first round to University of Maryland-Baltimore County.

Under Bennett the Cavaliers have just made it to the Sweet-16 and Final Four one time in nine years.

Michigan State and North



Zion Williamson's return boosts Duke into a good position!

Carolina could fall in tournament games, and still get a very high seeding.

Duke is a darkhorse. With 19-year-old phenom Zion Williamson on the floor the Blue Devils could go all the way. He blends well with teammates R. J. Barret and Cam Reddish.

One thing is for certain, Zion will be the No. 1 pick when the NBA draft commences.

The Blue Devils, without Zion split their last six games; one of those was a 71-70 home court win over Wake Forest.

The Deacons (4-12 in the ACC at the time) missed a tip-in at the buzzer costing the 24-point underdog a major upset.

When forecasting scores for upcoming tournament games, I use the Offense-Defense Index (ODI) which dates back to my 11-years as a **Stardust** consultant (1993-2004).

This the only method that I employ while feeding numbers to any oddsmaking source or interested fans.

The basic process is explained in the box on the right.

Time for a brief **Conference by Conference** look at what to expect and ODI numbers to matchup teams and get a final score.

AMERICA EAST

Vermont and Maryland-Baltimore County meet Saturday for the title.

Vermont crushed Binghamton 84-51 while UMBC edged Hartford 90-85 in the semi-finals. UMBC and Hartford went into overtime at 68-68. (I log finals into my database at the end of regulation, so both teams were registered at 68-68 and not 90-85 (too misleading for any consideration).

No Game Today

AMERICAN ATHLETIC

According to Las Vegas odds this event is over before it even tips off.

Houston is a giant favorite, followed by Cincinnati and Central Florida, both not nearly as highly rated. No one else has much of a chance.

Memphis is at home and the 4th pick among analysts.

The next two rounds will be Friday and Saturday, championship slated for Sunday.

No. 11 ranked Houston won

How to Use the ODI Method

Using the ODI system is very easy and extremely fast. From its first design to use at the **Stardust** and later, the concept dates back to the 1980s or before some of today's analytics were even born.

Obtain a team's offense index (OFF) and either add or subtract the opponent's defense index (DEF) to get the first team's probable points or final score. If site is a factor, use road or home indexes as the case may be. If neutral, use both road indexes.

	<u>OFF</u>	<u>DEF</u>	<u>Final</u>
Example: Wake Forest	73	+4	71
Miami-Florida	77	-2	81

Wake to score 73 (OFF) minus Miami DEF (-2) or 71 points. The Hurricanes anticipate 77 (OFF) and +4 (Wake DEF) or 81 points. This game was played Tuesday and Miami won 79-71.

Not all forecasts will be this close, and not all are winners!

the regular season with a 16-2 record and was 29-2 overall.

Tulane ended 0-18 in league play, 4-26 on the year. Little wonder Memphis fans are drooling

Connecticut 70 South Florida 66
Tulane 87 Tulane 71
SMU 73 Tulsa 72
Wichita St. 73 East Carolina 68

ATLANTIC COAST

Clemson and North Carolina State have to win this event to advance any higher.

Virginia, Duke and North Carolina are the three obvious choices. The remainder of the field trails as badly as Mickey Mouse in GOP Presidential Primary polls.

Duke is a very dangerous team and will have many fans in nearby Charlotte. Seats are a premium for this annual classic.

Virginia is 2-0 versus Carolina and the Heels have defeated

the Blue Devils twice.

Any team that is strong in the middle is going to drive coach Roy Williams crazy, the Heels do not have their usual interior might.

The longshots are Florida State, Virginia Tech and Louisville.

No other team deserves very much recognition.

Virginia 70 N. C. State 63
Virginia Tech 67 Florida State 66
North Carolina 79 Louisville 67
Duke 78 Syracuse 63

ATLANTIC Sun

Liberty beat Jacksonville by 14, North Florida by 8 and canceled Lipscomb's shot at the Final Four again this year, 74-68.

Both teams entered the title game with 14-2 conference records.

Concluded

ATLANTIC TEN

George Washington hung on

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yesterday afternoon to edge Massachusetts, 68-64 in overtime. In the 2nd contest, Richmond held off Fordham 52-50.

The conference is playing in New York's Barclays Center.

Rhode Island (9-9) and LaSalle (8-10) meet at noon, one of three meaningless contests.

The school that advances will be either Virginia Commonwealth (16-2), Davidson (14-4) or Dayton (13-5).

VCU has balanced scoring, guard Marcus Evans paced the team with 14.2 points per game, 16th best in the Atlantic-10.

Rhode Island 72 LaSalle 67
Geo. Mason 72 Geo. Washington 68
Duquense 75 St. Joseph's 74
St. Louis 66 Richmond 66

BIG EAST

From top to bottom the conference is no longer as powerful as its forerunner, yet five teams could dance at the "gala event."

Madison Square Garden hosts the league and its Saturday title contest. Fox (FS1) will televise all the games.

This is "must win time" for Georgetown, a school that is on the rim. The Hoyas will have to defeat Seton Hall today and post another victory tomorrow.

All roads to winning the tournament go through regular season champ Villanova (13-5). Marquette finished second (12-6) and four teams ended at 9-9.

Villanova 72 Providence 62
Creighton 74 Xavier 72
Marquette 74 St. John's 71
Georgetown 73 Seton Hall 73

BIG SKY

The battle between Montana (16-6) and Northern Colorado (15-5) should continue in Boise, Idaho.

Third place Eastern Washington comes into today's contest with a three game win streak and faces Montana State, a 75-71 winner over Idaho.

If there is any edge, Northern Colorado was 11-5 on the road - best in the league.

Montana 71 Sacramento St. 68
Weber St. 81 Portland St. 78
Northern Colorado 75 Sou. Utah 73
Montana St. 76 E. Washington 73

BIG SOUTH

Gardner-Webb wins the league title with a 76-65 victory over Radford. The champions were playing on Radford's home floor and won the the 11th time in 13-games.

D. J. Laster tallied a career best 32-points, missing a tie for the most ever in a championship game by two points.

No one else will make the Final Four cast.

Concluded

BIG TEN

Both Michigan State and Michigan seemingly have the inside path to the conference title, rather unimportant.

Half of the conference will be chosen to play in either the F4 or NIT.

Purdue actually finished in a tie for the title with the Spartans, both 16-4. The Wolverines were in first most of the regular season.

Home court was vital as the

top three teams were a collective 47-2, 21-15 on the road and 6-2 when on a neutral site.

The champ should be one of the listed three, Wisconsin and Maryland are certainly darkhorses and Iowa (10-10) belongs in the NIT.

The Hawkeyes' offense is led by the coach's son and he would be more valuable at a lower level school.

Indiana 68 Ohio State 68
Maryland 71 Nebraska 62
Minnesota 68 Penn State 67
Iowa 71 Illinois 63

BIG-12

Kansas began the season ranked as the best in college basketball.

Then center Udoka Azubuike suffered his second injury in two years, and the Jayhawks were no longer a major threat.

With the slippage of Kansas, Texas Tech and Kansas State concluded the year sharing the crown with 14-4 records.

Until mid-season, both Baylor and Iowa State contested for the lead, the evaporated.

Since the Big-12 organized, only once has a team won the basketball national championship; Kansas in 2008.

Iowa State 72 Baylor 71
Kansas State 66 TCU 61
Texas Tech 76 West Virginia 62
Kanasa 71 Texas 64

BIG WEST

Eight different teams have won in the past eight years, and there is doubt that CS-Fullerton will repeat its title performance from a year ago.

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Don't expect anything sensational from this league unless UC-Irvine continues its 13-game current winning streak.

Santa Barbara 77 Northridge 73
Fullerton 69 Davis 64
Irvine 70 Riverside 52
Hawaii 73 Long Beach 71

COLONIAL ATHLETIC

Northeastern won the title last night, beating Hofstra 82-74.

This is mostly an NIT conference.

Concluded

CONFERENCE USA

Old Dominion won the regular season title, unfortunately the team enters the tournament on a two game skid.

The gigantic field plays in The Ford Center (Frisco, Texas) and there seems to be "fake news" around UT-San Antonio.

The Roadrunners are fresh from a so-so season with an average of 80 points per game and allowing 75.

Their last regular season game was an 84-48 loss at Southern Miss; the winners hit on 16 3-point goals. Why would anyone guess they would be a factor.

There is only one genuine entrant, Old Dominion with a 13-5 record.

Old Dominion 63 Louisiana Tech 57
UA-Birmingham 71 San Antonio 69
North Texas 69 W. Kentucky 67
Southern Miss 75 Marshall 74

HORIZON LEAGUE

Northern Kentucky beat Wright St. 77-66 last night to capture the Horizon title.

Northern was avoided a tired lineup after surviving Oakland 64-63 Monday. Both challengers for the title had 13-5 records.

Concluded

IVY LEAGUE

It doesn't take very long to crown a champion when the top four teams meet in the first round.

Harvard vs Penn and Yale facing Princeton will take place next Saturday. The title contest is Sunday at noon in New Haven, Ct.

No Games Scheduled

METRO ATLANTIC

The MAAC is a little on the unpredictable level. Perennial powerhouse Iona finished 12-6, a half game ahead of Quinnipiac, Rider, Siena and Canisius.

This should have indicated a wild, free wheeling tournament.

It never happened. Iona scored an easy 81-60 rout of Monmouth Monday in the title match.

Concluded

MID-AMERICAN

Buffalo was a dominant force and one of the most under-rated teams this season. The Bulls averaged 86-points per game in conference play and permitted the opposition only 72.

Little wonder the nationally ranked team wound up winning 16 of 18 conference and 28 of 31 overall games.

The Bulls take a nine game

wining streak into today game against Akron.

Buffalo 83 Akron 70
Central Michigan 80
Kent State 78
Toledo 73 Northern Illinois 66
Ball St. 76 Bowling Green 75

MID-EASTERN

Nothing to get very enthused about, Norfolk State was on top with a 14-2 league log.

Overall, Norfolk had a 19-12 record; in fact, only three teams had winning records and five failed to win more than nine games.

Boring.

NC Central 75 Delaware St. 63
Howard 78 Bethune Cookman 78

MISSOURI VALLEY

No one stood out and Bradley upset Drake 57-54 to advance to the Final Four where the Braves will lose in the opening round.

Drake was regular season champ (12-6) and 7th place Northern Iowa was only three wins behind.

Concluded

MOUNTAIN WEST

Two very good teams deadlocked for the title, Nevada and Utah State (both 15-3).

Both deserve to be in the Final Four 68-team field.

There could be some early upsets, only Wyoming (4-14) and San Jose State (1-17) lack talent to challenge.

Nevada 74 Boise St. 63
San Diego St. 72 UNLV 70
Utah St. 76 New Mexico 66

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Fresno St. 73 Air Force 68

NORTHEAST

No tournament could boast a tighter field. Fairleigh-Dickinson, St. Francis, Pa., Robert Morris and Sacred Heart all had an even chance as the tourney began.

Only one game in the first six had a wide margin.

Fairleigh-Dickinson survived St. Francis for the Final Four berth last night, 85-76.

Concluded

OHIO VALLEY

All season long Belmont was one of the big surprises in college action.

Ranked in the nation's Top-20, Belmont was a sentimental favorite.

Murray State, always tough, ended up in a 16-2 tie for the regular season trophy and beat Belmont in the title game 75-65.

This is another case where both deserve tickets to the Big Dance.

Concluded

PACIFIC-12

Only Washington has set of positive statistics to avoid being relegated to the NIT.

The Huskies won 15 of 18 league games, ending three ahead of Arizona State.

Actually, the Pac-10 was lack luster all season and sparks appeared early when UCLA axed head coach Steve Alford after slightly more than a dozen games.

The NIT should feast on conference left-overs.

Arizona State won 21 of 30

games and should advance to the Final Four.

Washington 71 Southern Cal 60
Oregon St. 69 Colorado 67
Arizona St. 78 UCLA 73
Oregon 68 Utah 64

PATRIOT LEAGUE

Colgate and Bucknell collided for the title, and rightfully so. Both posted 13-5 records in conference play.

Colgate knocked off Bucknell last night 94-80 to advance.

Concluded

SOTHEASTERN

Alabama and Florida could make The Show with powerful outings in a tough conference.

Both teams enter the conference tournament with three consecutive losses. A fourth in a row indicates the next game will be in the NIT.

Seven teams could qualify, including Louisiana State (16-2), Tennessee (15-3), Kentucky (15-3), Auburn (11-7), South Carolina (11-7), Mississippi State (10-8) and Mississippi (10-8).

In this group, only South Carolina failed to post 20-wins

Florida 79 Arkansas 67
Auburn 72 Missouri 59
Mississippi 70 Alabama 69
Mississippi St. 71 Texas A&M 61

SOUTHERN

Wofford avoided an upset bid from UNC-Greensboro 70-58. The game was much closer than the final score and it was not until the closing minutes that Wofford actually gained the lead.

The victors had a horrible

time on offense, missing shots and rebounds, an area they normally excel in most games.

Concluded

SOUTHLAND

Sam Houston State and Abilene Christian are good teams, a combined 30-6 in league and 46-16 overall play.

One will deserved laurels while the loser becomes a threat in any NIT contest.

Lamar 72 New Orleans 71
SE Louisiana 70 Central Arkansas 67

SOUTHWESTERN

Prairie View A&M is far away the best team in this league that gets very little attention.

Texas Southern is a good fit for the NIT, a 14-4 league log and 20-12 overall mark.

No Games Today

SUMMIT

North Dakota State defeated Nebraska-Omaha last night for the championship and the automatic Final Four bid.

Nothing to get excited about.

Concluded

SUN BELT

Three 20-game winners and yet Georgia State, Texas State or Georgia Southern has "zero" shot at being in the Final Four more than just a few seconds.

UL-Lafayette 78 South Alabama 76
Coastal Carolina 80 UL-Monmroe 77

WEST COAST

A shocker as St. Mary's

stunned Gonzaga 60-47 in Las Vegas. Both will appear in the Final Four.

The losers shot like Wilt Chamberlain at the free throw line, even hitting the rim was good news.

It is difficult to see a second straight poor performance from coach Mark Few's battle tested team.

The loss is the first for Gonzaga against any league foe and team stands at 30-3.

Concluded

WESTERN ATHLETIC

New Mesico State is in a class by itself. The regular season resulted in winning 15 of 16 games. The overall mark of 27-4 is also impressive.

The only challenger could be Utah Valley (12-4).

New Mexico St. 88 Chicago St. 62
Bakersfield 70 Rio Grande 69
Utah Valley 75 Mo. Kansas City 68
Grand Canyon 73 Seattle 69

The Journal is Getting Back to Where it "Was"

The Journal is slowly returning to what the product used to be when I was 30-years younger. Several attempts to produce it in the same fashion have failed miserably in recent years - neurologist contends that my 2013 brain injury was more severe than I realized, and simply attempted to do too much too soon.

Taking time off really helped and I am not 100 percent nor will I ever be, but the doctor says he has yet to meet a person my age that does the things I am capable of attempting and completing. (It only cost \$15,000 to get him to make such an encouraging comment.)

Another aid is in a much faster computer and starting to understand all the changes that have been made in Office 365 and how certain steps in Visual Basic language can create shortcuts.

I want to thank everyone that has at least taken a glimpse at my new website and it is not a problem, easy to create and maintain.

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For future use

NBA Today

LeBron James has aided the Lakers' cause just as much as pretending to be an athlete to get a college scholarship. Los Angeles is 31-36 and lost four in a row. The log tomorrow will show a 31-37 record and five consecutive setbacks.

Orlando 109 Cleveland 99
Oklahoma City 106 Indiana 106
Boston 119 Sacramento 109
Toronto 117 LA Lakers 110
Utah 113 Minnesota 106
Denver 114 Dallas 102

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For future use