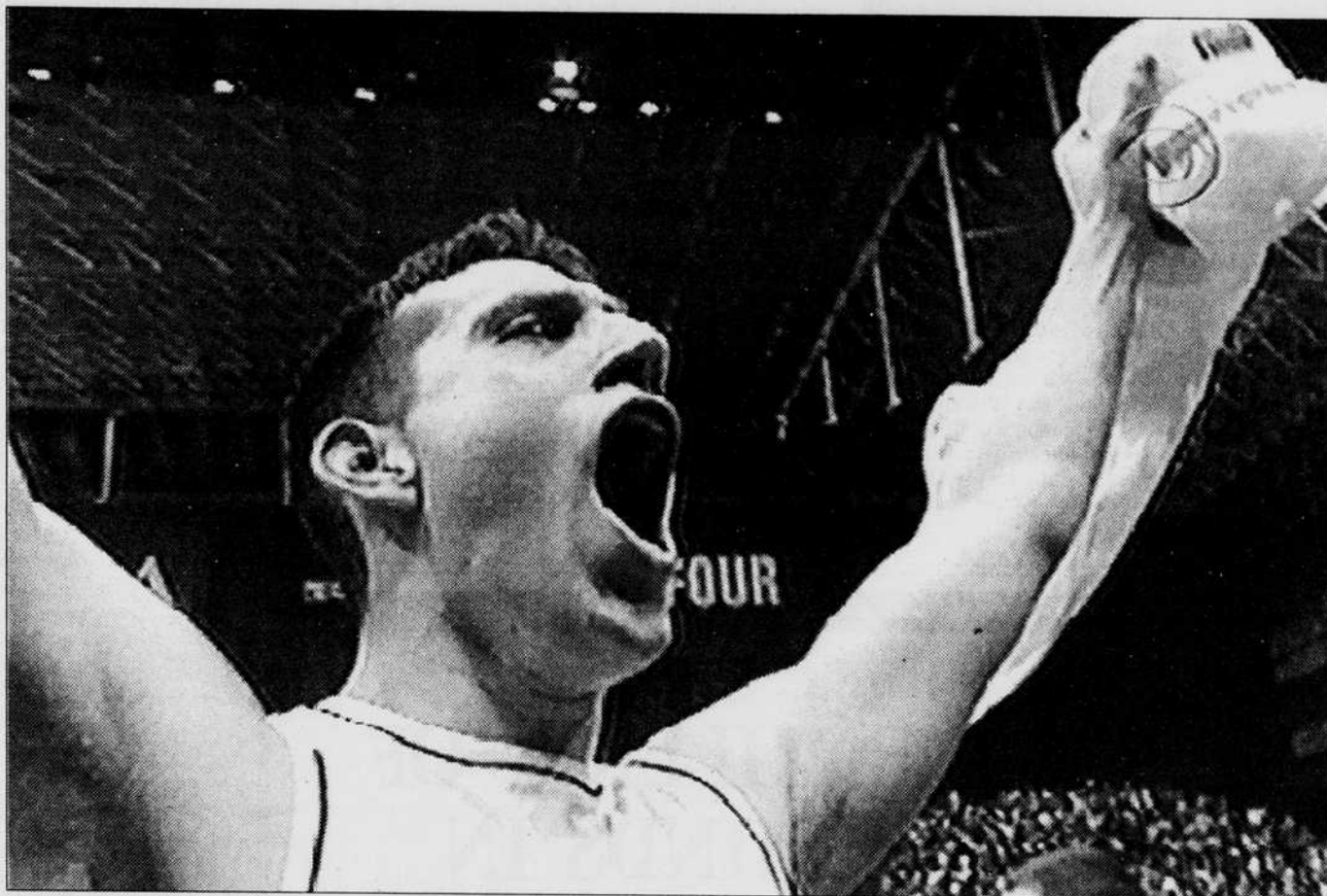




NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP

"We're
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Tubby Smith
Kentucky head coach



"We've
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Cameron Mills
Kentucky guard

Kentucky's Scott Padgett basks in the glory of Kentucky's 78-69 victory over Utah in the men's NCAA championship game. Padgett led all players with 17 points as the Wildcats beat the Utes in the tournament for the third straight season.

COURTESY OF CBS-TV

A final comeback to glory

Kentucky
came back
from a
second-half
deficit for
the third
straight
game to
claim
another
national
title

By Jim O'Connell
The Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — Call them the Comeback 'Cats.

Kentucky capped a truly maddening March with an unprecedented second-half rally, beating Utah 78-69 Monday night to win its second NCAA championship in three years. The Wildcats did it this time with a new coach and without stars in their lineup.

In its third straight rally of the tournament, Kentucky overcame the largest half-time deficit — 10 points — in a championship game to win its seventh national title.

"We're comeback kids," Kentucky coach Tubby Smith said. "These kids have done it all."

With Smith working the sidelines in-

stead of Rick Pitino and with former stars Antoine Walker, Ron Mercer and Derek Anderson in the NBA, Kentucky moved one trophy closer to UCLA's record total of 11.

MARCH MADNESS

It was the third straight year the Wildcats were in the championship game — they lost to Arizona in overtime last season — and the third straight year they ended Utah's season in the NCAA tournament.

Utah's impressive run to what would have been the school's second title ended because Kentucky did what No. 1 seeds Arizona and North Carolina couldn't do against the Utes — shoot well.

Kentucky fell behind in the first half and

trailed 41-31 at halftime after a 10-0 Utah run. The deficit was as many as 12 points in the opening minutes of the second half before Kentucky started shooting well.

"We're a fighting team — comeback 'Cats," Kentucky forward Heshimu Evans said.

The Wildcats (35-4) had been down before in the tournament. In the South Regional final, they battled back from a 17-point second-half deficit against Duke, and in the national semifinal, they fell behind by 10 before rallying to beat Stanford.

"We've come back all year long," Wildcats guard Cameron Mills said. "Every time we fell behind, we never quit."

Kentucky's comebacks were just part of what made the NCAA tournament special

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Game

■ **SCORE**
Kentucky 78
Utah 69

■ **POINTS
LEADER**
Scott Padgett,
17 points

■ **TOP ON THE
BOARDS**
Mike Doleac,
10 rebounds

Baseball potshots, puns and predictions

OPINION



**Rob
Moseley**

Pardon me, all you Oregonians, for this foray into the unknown, but I'd like to talk to you for a moment about our national pastime.

I know most of you agree with H. J. Dutiel's assessment of baseball as "a game which consists of tapping a ball with a piece of wood, then running like a lunatic." But for the rest of the country, it represents a piece of Americana, a microcosm of life played out 162 times a year that is rivaled only by ESPN in its importance to our society. Or maybe that's just me.

Regardless, the 1998 baseball season is one of the most eagerly anticipated in recent memory for a few reasons.

First of all, fans this season can expect to see more homers than a "Simpsons" marathon, more taters than an Idaho farm, more bombs than Saddam's palace, more ...

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A disappointing postseason?

Upon first glance, the Pacific-10 Conference women's basketball teams' performances in the NCAA Tournament could be deemed as disappointing.

Although the Pac-10 had a No. 1 seed in Stanford and three teams ranked in the final Associated Press top 25 — two in the top 10 — the conference failed to have a team advance past the Sweet 16 for the first time in five years.

Stanford was the biggest disappointment of both the men's and women's tournament, becoming the first No. 1 seed in history to lose to a 16 seed when it was upset by mighty Harvard in the first round — on Stanford's home court.

It was the first time since 1994 that Stanford failed to reach the Final Four and just the second time in the Cardinal's 12 tournament appearances that it failed to get out of the first round.

Injuries are the convenient excuse for Stanford, and admittedly, losing Vanessa

Nygaard and Kristin Folkl days before the tournament hurt immensely.

Perhaps that was a valid excuse for not advancing deep into the tournament, but the Cardinal was still talented enough that it should have been able to get past an overachieving Harvard squad. There's no excuse for that.

Going into the tournament, the general consensus was that the Pac-10 was supposed to have at least two teams — Arizona and Stanford — in the Sweet 16. The fact that Arizona was the only team to advance past the second round was a bit disappointing.

But there should be an asterisk in the record books.

Plain and simple, UCLA got robbed. The Bruins, for all practical purposes, won their second-round game against Alabama on the Crimson Tide's home court.

For anyone who missed it, UCLA led by one with 0.8 seconds left. First, an Al-

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BASKETBALL



Women's
Pac-10
Notes

by Alex Pond