

EA Sports game sparks Madness



TWO MINUTES FOR CROSSCHECKING

PETER HOCKADAY

Have you ever played that word association game, where someone (usually your psychologist) says a word, and you fire back the first word that pops into your mind?

March. Madness.
Tournament. Bracket.
Buzzer. Beater.
Final. Four.

Aahhhhhh March. Spring break, golf, CBS all day, every day. I even watch the soap operas in between the Madness. Days of Our Lives? You know it.

So, of course, you want to know who I'm picking for the Final Four. Doesn't everybody? (Sarcasm people, learn to recognize it).

Well, if you go by the video game, EA Sports' March Madness 2001, that fellow sports staffer Adam Jude and I played the other day. Boston College and Arizona will square off in the championship game.

Unfortunately, Jude is a video gaming God, whereas I am still trying to figure out the controls of my original Nintendo, so he (playing with Boston College) spanked me (playing as Arizona) around in the final two minutes and took the game by 10 points or so. Also unfortunately, our other two Final Four teams were Duke and California, who both happen to be in the same regions as our finalists (we obviously played this mock tournament before the actual tournament pairings were released. We may be dumb sportswriters, but we take our March Madness seriously).

Even though I lost the game on the scoreboard, I won it in spirit and heart, which is why I'm picking Arizona to win it all. Go 'Cats!

No, seriously, I really do like Boston College going all the way to the title game. The Eagles are the quintessential Cinderella's, complete with the glass slipper coming off at midnight, which is exactly why the Wildcats will topple BC in the final.

As for Arizona, yes I hate them too, but they have so much talent that it will be impossible to deny them once they fire up the V10 engines. Arenas, Woods, Gardner, Jefferson and Olson all on fire at the same time? The thought sends chills down my spine.

The rest of my Final Four is completed by Stanford coming out of the West Regional, and, in a shocker, Oklahoma coming out of the South.

Why Stanford? They have talent up and down the roster and at every position, a coach, Mike Montgomery, that has a hoops IQ so high I'm surprised his head doesn't explode basketballs and a longball assassin in Casey Jacobsen, who, when he's on, is unstoppable. The Cardinal's bench is depleted, however, which is why they will fall to BC in the semifinals.

Why Oklahoma? If you saw the Big 12 title game, or any part of the Big 12 Championship, you know that the Sooners are hotter than a fire poker. They have long-ball precision and play with passion and heart. They will do what Oklahoma State cannot — harness all their emotion on the court, and upset a few teams on their way to Minneapolis.

It's insanity. It's craziness. It's March Madness.

Peter Hockaday is a sports reporter for the Emerald. He can be reached at phockaday@yahoo.com.

Final 4 Picks

Jeff Smith, sports editor

Men: Arizona, North Carolina, Boston College, Maryland
Champ: North Carolina
Women: Connecticut, Oklahoma, Iowa State, Tennessee
Champ: Oklahoma

Scott Pesznecker, assistant editor

Men: Arizona, Stanford, North Carolina, Duke
Champ: Stanford
Women: Duke, Tennessee, Connecticut, Notre Dame
Champ: Tennessee

Peter Hockaday, sports reporter

Men: Arizona, Oklahoma, Boston College, Stanford
Champ: Arizona
Women: Notre Dame, Connecticut, Oklahoma, Tennessee
Champ: Connecticut

Robbie McCallum, sports reporter

Men: Arizona, North Carolina, Stanford, Duke
Champ: Arizona
Women: Rutgers, LA. Tech., Tennessee, Notre Dame
Champ: Tennessee

Adam Jude, sports reporter

Men: Arizona, North Carolina, Maryland, Boston College
Champ: Maryland
Women: Tennessee, Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Connecticut
Champ: Notre Dame

Jack Clifford, editor in chief

Men: Duke, Indiana, Florida, Arizona
Champ: Duke
Women: Tennessee, Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Connecticut
Champ: Tennessee

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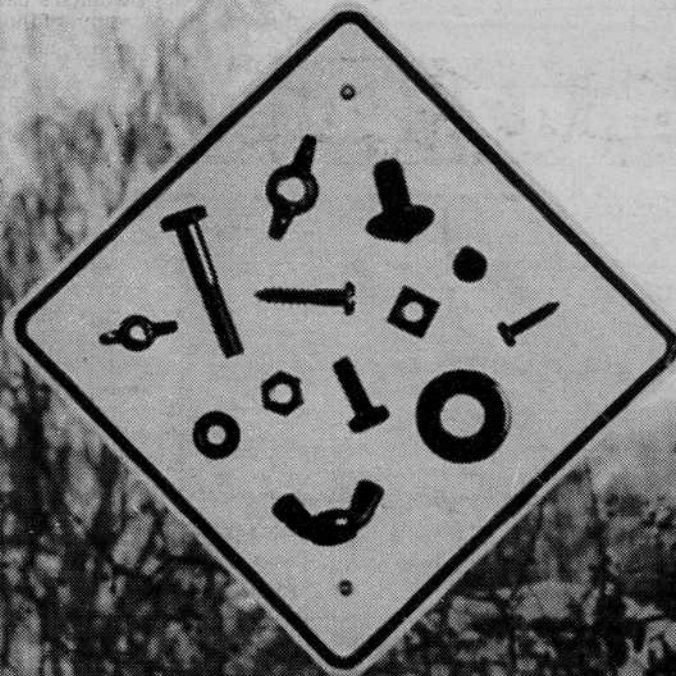
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