

# FINAL FOUR PICKS



**Peter Hockaday**



**Adam Jude**



**Hank Hager**



**Jesse Thomas**



**Mindi Rice**



**Michael Kleckner**



**Adelle Lennox**

**Pittsburgh**

**Kentucky**

**Kentucky**

**Midwest**

**Kentucky**

**Oregon**

**Oregon**

**So. Illinois**

**Arizona**

**Kansas**

**Illinois**

**West**

**Kansas**

**Kansas**

**Arizona**

**Duke**

**Syracuse**

**Syracuse**

**Okla. St.**

**East**

**Syracuse**

**St. Joseph's**

**Wake Forest**

**Louisville**

**Florida**

**Texas**

**Xavier**

**South**

**Texas**

**LSU**

**Xavier**

**Texas**

**Florida**

**Kentucky**

**Okla. St.**

**Runner-up**

**Kentucky**

**St. Joseph's**

**Wake Forest**

**Duke**

**Arizona**

**Texas**

**Kentucky**

**Champion**

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## Big 12, SEC reign in bracket

David Teel  
Daily Press (KRT)

GREENSBORO, N.C. — The NCAA Tournament bracket unveiled Sunday confirms this season's power base and rewards three regular-season champions from mid-major conferences.

The 65-team field includes six teams each from the Big 12 and Southeastern Conference, widely acknowledged as the nation's strongest. Five Pacific-10 Conference teams and four Atlantic Coast Conference teams qualified, with North Carolina State earning a bid by advancing to the league tournament final.

Two Big 12 teams, Texas and Oklahoma, received No. 1 regional seeds in the South and East, respectively. The other No. 1s are Arizona in the West and Kentucky in the Midwest.

But the 10-member selection committee did more than cater to the major conferences that hog the airwaves. Gonzaga, Southern Illinois and Butler, regular-season champs of the West Coast, Missouri Valley and Horizon, respectively, received at-large bids after losing in the finals of their league tournaments.

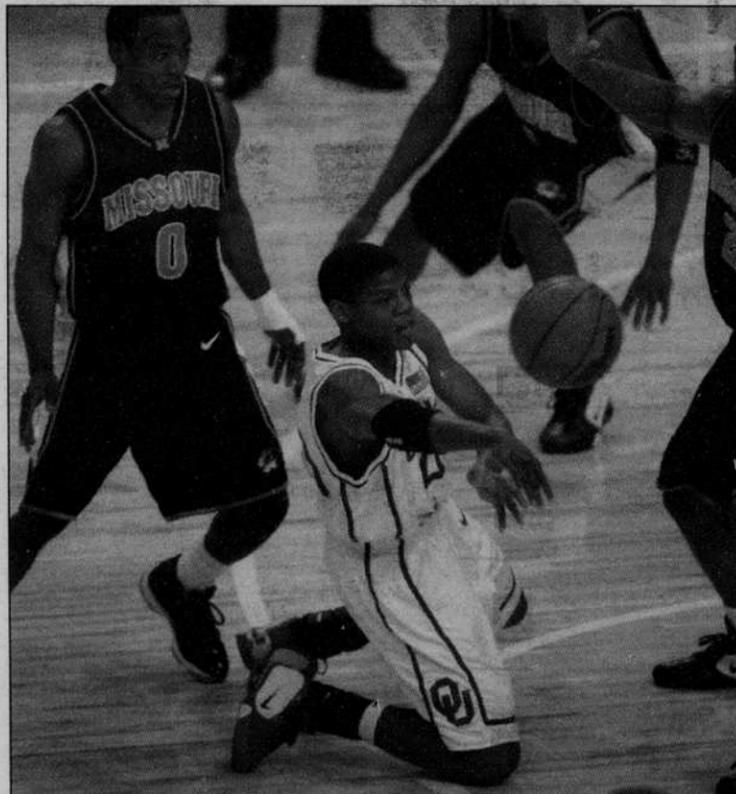
"It was a sleepless night," Southern Illinois coach Bruce Weber said of awaiting Selection Sunday.

With 25 victories, Butler was among last season's most debated exclusions, but selection committee chairman Jim Livengood said history played no part in the Bulldogs' bid.

"There might be make-up calls in other sports," said Livengood, the athletic director at Arizona. "But there's no make-up calls with the committee. We start completely fresh."

The panel certainly did no favors for Livengood's school. Arizona faces a daunting West bracket that features Big 12 regular-season champion Kansas, ACC tournament champ Duke and Big Ten tournament winner Illinois as seeds 2-4.

Also, if form holds, Arizona and



Ron Jenkins KRT

Oklahoma's Hollis Price goes to his knees to pass against Missouri in the Big 12 Tournament title game Sunday. The Sooners won 49-47, and are a No. 1 seed.

Kentucky, the top teams in every poll, will meet in the Final Four semifinals instead of the national title game.

Livengood said Kentucky was placed in the Midwest rather than the South because Minneapolis, site of the Midwest semifinals and final, is closer to Lexington, Ky., than San Antonio, the South venue.

"The committee would do a great injustice if we tried to predict ahead," Livengood added.

Among the teams that might term their absence from the field unjust: Boston College and Seton Hall. Both closed strongly and finished 10-6 in the Big East. Meanwhile, Alabama

received a bid, despite a 7-9 SEC finish, a quarterfinal exit from the conference tournament, and 11 losses in its last 19 games.

Livengood attributed the Crimson Tide's inclusion to its 10-1 record against a non-conference schedule that included Oklahoma and Xavier, and that ranks 34th on the Rating Percentage Index produced by collegepi.com. Among the 34 at-large teams, Alabama is the only one with a losing conference record.

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