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NCAA TOURNAMENT

BOUND TO HAPPEN

1 VS 16 MATCHUP INCHES CLOSER TO AN UPSET



AP Photo/Bill Wippert

Mount St. Mary's guard Elijah Long (55) drives to the basket against Villanova forward Kris Jenkins (2) and guard Josh Hart (3) during the first half of a first-round men's college basketball game in the NCAA Tournament Thursday in Buffalo, N.Y.

Upset likely some year soon

By EDDIE PELLIS
 Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — It's going to happen. Maybe not Friday, when Kansas and North Carolina take their turn at trying to avoid history. But if not then, well, some year soon.

A No. 1 seed is going to lose to a No. 16, and with the direction college basketball is going of late, it may not even be considered that big of an upset.

"The extremes are scooting closer to the (middle), year in and year out," Gonzaga coach Mark Few said after his top-seeded Bulldogs slowly inched away for a 66-46 victory over South Dakota State on Thursday.

"When you look, statistically, at all these things, and say, 'The 1 seed did this or that,' that might have been back in the day. When you look at how close these games have been" lately, it's a different story, he said.

Well, technically, Few isn't right. In the first five years of the 64-team bracket, there were six games between 1s and 16s decided by single digits — none more excruciatingly memorable than Georgetown's 50-49 squeaker over Pete Carril's Princeton team back in 1989.

In the last five years, only four games have come down to single digits, including Gonzaga's too-close-for-comfort 64-58 win over Southern in 2013, the last time the Bulldogs were a 1 seed.

But there's more to these games than the final score, and Thursday's action — a pair of 20-point wins for the 1s — might have been Exhibits 1 and 1A.

Mount St. Mary's, fresh off a First Four win two nights earlier, looked more in sync and better prepared for one half against Villanova. Sparked by the guard play



AP Photo/Bill Wippert

Villanova head coach Jay Wright reacts during the second half of a first-round men's college basketball game against Mount St. Mary's in the NCAA Tournament Thursday in Buffalo, N.Y. Villanova won, 76-56.

of Miles Wilson and Elijah Long, the Mountaineers had an 8-point lead early, and trailed by only 1 at the half before falling 76-56.

"I do think some of it was Mount St. Mary's. I really do," Villanova coach Jay Wright said about his team's slow start. "I think those guards are smaller and quicker than any guards we played against. It gave us trouble."

Every bit as telling was Gonzaga's win over South Dakota State, a team that, by almost any measure, had the wrong number next to its name coming into this tournament. Yes, the Jackrabbits were only 18-16, a fourth-place finisher in their less-than-powerhouse conference. But they had the nation's second-leading scorer in Mike Daum and had won nine of 11 coming into the tournament.

Few said they looked better in person than they did on film — and after a grinder of a win, he's certainly more familiar with Daum and the Jackrabbits than

members of the NCAA selection committee whose job it was to seed them.

"Really organized," Few said of the Jackrabbits. "They have an elite-level player that can get 30 on anybody in this tournament. And then their toughness. We got to the first timeout, I was like, 'All right, this is going to be a war.'"

There figure to be more like this.

Parity is, quite simply, as much a part of college hoops these days as brackets and one-and-dones. It helps get the George Masons and VCUs of the world to the Final Four; eventually it figures to play into a 16 finally knocking off a 1.

Asked to explain it all a few years ago, when Wichita State made a surprise run to the Final Four, Bill Raftery of CBS said AAU and summer leagues have leveled the playing field by making everyone familiar to everyone.

"The kids all know one another, so they're not in the least bit in awe of an opponent," he said. "You get Wichita State playing Louisville and they don't really give a damn. It's just another team to them."

On Friday, two more 16 seeds get a chance to bust the bracket, even if it might not shock the world.

Coming off a First-Four victory Wednesday over North Carolina Central, UC Davis plays its second-ever NCAA Tournament game, this time against Kansas.

Texas Southern brings the worst 3-point-shooting and defensive-rebounding stats in the 64-team field into a game against North Carolina.

If things go to form, No. 1s will move to 132-0 lifetime in the 1-16 matchup.

If they don't — well, nobody will say they didn't see it coming. "Someone can have that from here on out," Few said of the top seeding. "I've served my time. I'll go ahead and land somewhere else."

Fishermen outlast Gladstone in nine

The Daily Astorian

Astoria bounced back from a Wednesday loss to North Marion with a 2-1 win over Gladstone in nine innings Thursday in a non-league baseball game at CMH Field.

Trey Hageman's single off Gladstone pitcher Ben McCoy drove in Burke Matthews with the game-winning run, as the Fishermen posted their first victory of the season.

The Gladiators had tied the game at 1-1 in the top of the seventh, scoring on an error.

Ole Englund picked up the victory on the mound, as the senior tossed three innings, giving up two hits with two strikeouts. McCoy took the loss, allowing one hit and one run in one-and-a-third innings.

Jackson Arnsdorf was Astoria's starting pitcher, and gave up

SCOREBOARD

PREP SCHEDULE

TODAY

Softball — North Marion at Astoria, 3 p.m.

SATURDAY

Baseball — Blanchet Catholic at Warrenton, 3 p.m.

just two hits with six strikeouts in six innings.

At the plate, the Fishermen had six hits from six different players. Tyler Lyngstad had a triple for the only extra-base hit of the game, while the Fishermen drew five walks and had three hit batters.

Matthews drove in Jasy Gohl with a single in the bottom of the fourth for the game's first run.

In the bottom of the ninth, Matthews drew a leadoff walk and advanced to third on an error before scoring on Hageman's game-winning hit.

Trojans top Loggers

The Daily Astorian

MT. ANGEL — In their first time outdoors this season, the Knappa softball team faced a tough task at Kennedy in a non-league season opener.

The Trojans — a Final Four team from a year ago — allowed just two hits (two singles by Kaitlyn Truax), and scored a 15-0 win over the Lady Loggers.

Madelynn Weaver took the loss in the circle for Knappa, as she

struck out five in five innings.

The Loggers return to action next Wednesday at Portland Christian, followed by a road trip to eastern Oregon, March 27 to March 30.

Lady Fish, Gulls both fall

In local softball action Thursday, Gladstone defeated Astoria 8-0 in the season opener for the Lady Fishermen at CMH Field; and Molalla got past Seaside, 8-2, in nonleague action at Broadway Field.

Area students ride in equestrian contests

The Daily Astorian

Do Fishermen and Loggers ride horses?

The answer is yes, as riders from Astoria and Knappa are taking part in the Oregon High School Equestrian Team competitions, with one meet remaining in the season.

Competing for Astoria are Kaisa Israel (with Bo), Barry James (Malie and Mia) and Rahlie Osburn (Miley and Luke); and Knappa riders are Kaitlyn Landwehr (Jake), Haylee Skipper (Jigger and Doc), Ellie Smith (Bluzee and Mazie), Kourtney Tischer (Bruno) and Madison Johanson (Katie).

The Astoria coaches are Britany Israel and Michelle Osburn, and coaching Knappa are Judy

Skirvin and Suzie Smith.

Some of the top finishes for the locals in Meet No. 1 included Kaisa Israel (fifth out of 26 riders in Hunt Seat Equitation); Ellie Smith (fifth), Rahlie Osburn (seventh) and Barry James (10th) out of 72 competitors in Barrels; and James and Osburn combined to take fourth out of 42 teams in the Two-Man Birangle.

In the second meet, Israel won the Saddle Seat Equitation; Landwehr was second in Dressage, second in Showmanship and tied for third in Hunt Seat Equitation; Smith was fifth out of 71 riders in Barrels and sixth (out of 67) in Figure 8; Tischer placed seventh (out of 25) in Dressage; James was seventh (out of 59) in Keyhole and seventh in Figure 8.



Submitted Photo

Kaisa Israel, left, and Kaitlyn Landwehr are two of the top Oregon High School Equestrian Team riders for Astoria and Knappa.

Drive 4 local sports nears

The Daily Astorian

Ford Motor Co. and Dane Gouge's Astoria Ford will donate \$20 to the Astoria Youth Athletics or Warrenton High School (specify which) for every person from a unique household who test drives a brand new Ford vehicle Saturday.

The "Drive 4 UR Community" event takes place at Dane Gouge's

Astoria Ford, 1809 SE Ensign Lane in Warrenton, beginning at 9 a.m. Saturday.

The program can help raise up to \$6,000 split between Astoria Youth Athletics and Warrenton High School.

No purchase is necessary. In previous years, Astoria Ford has helped raise over \$50,000 for Astoria High School through the Drive 4 UR Community program.