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DIVINCENZO MAKES IT RAIN

Nova tops Michigan 79-62 for title

By **EDDIE PELLIS**
Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — When he wasn't dribbling behind his back, winking to the TV announcers, stuffing shots or dishing out assists, Villanova guard Donte DiVincenzo was making it rain.

First, 3-pointers.

Later on, confetti.

The redhead kid with the nickname Big Ragu came off the bench to make five 3s and score 31 points Monday to lift 'Nova to another blowout victory in the NCAA Tournament — this time 79-62 over Michigan for its second national title in three seasons.

The sophomore guard had 12 points and an assist during a first-half run to help the Wildcats (36-4) pull ahead, then scored nine straight for Villanova midway through the second to snuff out the Wolverines. He capped the second shooting skein with a 3-pointer from a step behind the arc. He punctuated it with a knowing wink over to the sideline, where TV announcers Jim Nantz and Bill Raftery were sitting.

Yep, he knew he could do it. And his teammates were more than willing to let him steal the show.

"If someone's hot, feed 'em," said Jalen Brunson, the national Player of the Year, who finished with nine points and was perfectly fine with playing a supporting role on this night.

In taking the program's third overall title, Villanova won all six games by double digits over this tournament run, joining Michigan State (2000), Duke (2001) and North Carolina (2009) in that rare air.

The last team to win its two Final Four games by 16 or more: UCLA in 1968. During the dynasty.

One key question: Does Jay Wright's team belong on the list of the best of all-time?



AP Photo/Chris Steppig
 Villanova's Donte DiVincenzo goes up for a shot past Michigan's Charles Matthews during the second half in the championship game.



AP Photo/David J. Phillip
 Villanova's Donte DiVincenzo chases a loose ball against Michigan's Charles Matthews.

Maybe so, considering the way Villanova dismantled everyone in front of it in a tournament that was dripping with upsets, underdogs and at least the appearance of parity.

Maybe so, considering the Wildcats won in seemingly every way imaginable. This

victory came two nights after they set a Final Four record with 18 3-pointers (they had 10 in this one), and one week after they relied more on defense in a win over Texas Tech in the Elite Eight.

"We don't really look at it that way," Wright said. "We

don't look at it as, did we just dominate that team? No. We played well."

And really, that debate's for later.

DiVincenzo squashed any questions about this game with a 10-for-15 shooting night — 5 for 7 from 3 — that was, frankly, better than that. He was a no-doubt winner of the Final Four's most-outstanding-player award.

With Michigan trying to stay in striking range early in the second half, he opened his game-sealing run with an around-the-back dribble to get to the hoop and get fouled. On the other end, he delivered a two-handed rejection of Michigan's Charles Matthews — his second block of the game, to go with five rebounds and three assists — when Matthews tried to bring it into the paint.



AP Photo/David J. Phillip
 Villanova head coach Jay Wright celebrates with guard Donte DiVincenzo.

Villanova's 6th man breaks out in starring role vs Michigan

By **RALPH D. RUSSO**
Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — Donte DiVincenzo's biggest contribution to Villanova's 2016 national championship was made at practice, often playing the role of the opponents' best player.

The Michael Jordan of Delaware, as his teammates call him, has come a long way from a redshirt freshman season that was frustrating at times, but probably helped set the stage for a bigger role toward Villanova's next national championship.

DiVincenzo was the breakout star of the NCAA Tournament title game Monday night, scoring a career-high 31 points against Michigan in a 79-62 victory that gave the Wildcats two titles in three seasons.

"Donte's willingness to come off the bench this year and be the sixth man

really separated us from other teams. He was a sixth starter," Villanova coach Jay Wright said. "He had a clear head and he did whatever we needed all year. Tonight we needed 31. I didn't think we'd need him to do that but he has done it, so we'll take it."

When Villanova was struggling with its shots early in the first half, DiVincenzo provided a wakeup call for the Wildcats. He scored 16 and was the main reason why the Wildcats were able to erase an early seven-point deficit against a Michigan defense that was one of the stingiest in the nation.

In the second half, when Michigan tried to make a move, DiVincenzo put down the uprising with 11 straight points and a wink toward the sideline at his buddy and former Wildcats star Josh Hart, who is in his rookie season with the Los Angeles Clippers.

Ogunbowale puts stamp on thrilling hoops season

By **DOUG FEINBERG**
Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Arike Ogunbowale put an exclamation point on a thrilling women's college basketball season.

Her off-balance 3-pointer in the title game capped a record comeback by Notre Dame and an incredible weekend for the sport. The Final Four got started with two stirring overtime games — the first time that's happened. The weekend ended with a historic championship game that left the sellout crowd amazed.

"Phenomenal for women's basketball. Three exciting games. I hope the ratings reflect it," Notre Dame coach Muffet McGraw said after the 61-58 win Sunday night. "The crowd was tremendous tonight. Everybody came back. Just an incredible job by Columbus and the local community. Great support for women's basket-

ball and definitely one of the best Final Fours since 2001, right?"

That was the only other time McGraw and the Fighting Irish cut down the nets. It's been even longer since a title game came down to a last-second shot. Ogunbowale's 3-pointer was just the second last-second shot that won a championship game. North Carolina great Charlotte Smith made a 3-pointer at the buzzer in 1994 that lifted the Tar Heels to an improbable one-point win over Louisiana Tech.

"This was the best Final Four in terms of play on the court we've ever seen," ESPN analyst Rebecca Lobo said. "I can't think of another Final Four that was better than this. It showcased women's basketball at its absolute best. So many years we've had a great semifinal game and the final was a disappointment. This one wasn't."

The Final Four belonged to Ogunbowale and the Irish.

Happ, Springer reflect new breed of leadoff hitters

Associated Press

When Ian Happ hit the first pitch the 2018 baseball season for a home run, he gave opening day an immediate highlight — but the Chicago outfielder's shot wasn't a total surprise.

Gone are the days when leadoff batters were supposed to be speedy singles hitters. Now players like Happ — who had 24 homers and only eight stolen bases last year — fit the mold.

There's no longer much debate about the importance of on-base percentage, especially at the top of the lineup. It helps to have baserunners when the power hitters in the middle of the order come up — and stolen bases can actually be more useful at the bottom of the order, as a way of manufacturing runs with weaker hitters. While it's still nice to have some speed in the No. 1 spot, it's by no means a requirement.

Happ's home run gave the Cubs an instant 1-0 lead over Miami, and Houston's George

Springer also hit a leadoff homer against Texas on Thursday. Even with the speedy Jose Altuve on the roster, Springer was the Astros' main leadoff hitter last season. He hit 34 homers and had only five steals for the World Series champs.

Baltimore even put Chris Davis atop the batting order to start this season. Davis has never stolen more than four bases in a year. He's known for hitting home runs and drawing walks, and he may need to improve his low batting average (.215 last season) if he's going to last as a leadoff hitter. He's 0 for 12 to start 2018.

Here are a few more notes from an abbreviated first week around the major leagues:

OH YES

Shohei Ohtani won his debut as a pitcher Sunday, allowing three runs and three hits in six innings for the Los Angeles Angels in their game at Oakland. He went 1 for 5 in his lone appearance as a hitter.

EXTREME MEASURES

Texas slugger Joey Gallo, who hit 41 home runs last season, faced a four-man outfield at times in a series against the Astros. He solved that by hitting a home run over the shift on Sunday.

Only 28 percent of Gallo's balls in play last year were grounders, according to Fangraphs.com.

HARD LUCK

The Dodgers outscored the Giants 14-2 in a four-game series in Los Angeles — and only came away with a split.

WILD INNING

Detroit and Pittsburgh were tied 6-all heading into the ninth in their season opener Friday. Then each team scored four runs before the game went to extra innings. The Pirates eventually won 13-10 in 13.

Only twice previously had a game gone to extra innings after both teams scored exactly

four runs in the ninth, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

LINE OF THE WEEK

Matt Davidson of the Chicago White Sox became the fourth player to homer three times on opening day, joining George Bell (1988), Tuffy Rhodes (1994) and Dmitri Young (2005). Of the four players to accomplish the feat, three of them — including Davidson — did it against the Royals.

HIGHLIGHT REEL

The Yankees may have their lineup of home run hitters, but Toronto's Kevin Pillar showed New York a different way of getting around the bases.

SCOREBOARD

PREP SPORTS SCHEDULE

TODAY

Baseball — Scappoose at Astoria (Tapiola Park), 5 p.m.; Valley Catholic at Seaside, 5 p.m.; Knappa at Colton, 4:30 p.m.

Softball — Astoria at Scappoose, 5 p.m.; Seaside at Valley Catholic, 5 p.m.

Girls golf — Seaside at Valley Catholic, 1 p.m.

Boys golf — Seaside at Astoria, 2 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Baseball — Warrenton at Ilwaco, 4 p.m.; Knappa at Horizon Christian, 4:30 p.m.

Softball — Dayton at Warrenton, 4:30 p.m.

THURSDAY

Baseball — Astoria at Scappoose, 5 p.m.; Seaside at

Valley Catholic, 5 p.m.; Gaston at Warrenton, 4:30 p.m.

Softball — Scappoose at Astoria, 5 p.m.; Valley Catholic at Seaside, 5 p.m.

Track — Banks/Valley Catholic at Astoria, 3:30 p.m.; Scappoose/Tillamook at Seaside, 3:30 p.m.; Lewis & Clark League preview, Portland Christian, 3:30 p.m.

FRIDAY

Baseball — Clatskanie at Seaside, 5 p.m.; La Pine vs. Knappa (Volcanoes Stadium), 4:30 p.m.

Boys golf — Seaside at Ridgeview, Noon

SATURDAY

Track — Daily Astorian Invitational, at Seaside HS, 10 a.m.

Baseball — Colton at Warrenton, Noon

30th Annual
DAILY ASTORIAN INVITATIONAL
TRACK MEET
 10 A.M. SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 2018
 SEASIDE HIGH SCHOOL
 Featuring boys and girls high school teams from throughout the Columbia-Pacific Region