

Men's College Basketball

Woodard, Hield lead Oklahoma's Sweet 16 romp

By BERNIE WILSON
Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — The Oklahoma Sooners proved they can thrive quite nicely in the NCAA Tournament even if Buddy Hield isn't going off.

Because of that, the Sooners are one win away from returning to the Final Four for the first time in 14 seasons.

Jordan Woodard scored 22 points and Hield had 17 points and 10 rebounds to lead the second-seeded Sooners to a 77-63 romp over third-seeded and cold-shooting Texas A&M in the NCAA West Regional on Thursday.

It was a nice display of teamwork by the Sooners (28-7), who had five players in double figures as they advanced to the Elite Eight for the first time since 2009. They'll play Saturday against Oregon, which beat Duke Thursday night.

"That's even better," Hield said. "I'm able to have fun around there and watch my teammates make shots and make plays."

Hield had scored 27 and 36 points in the Sooners' first- and second-round victories.

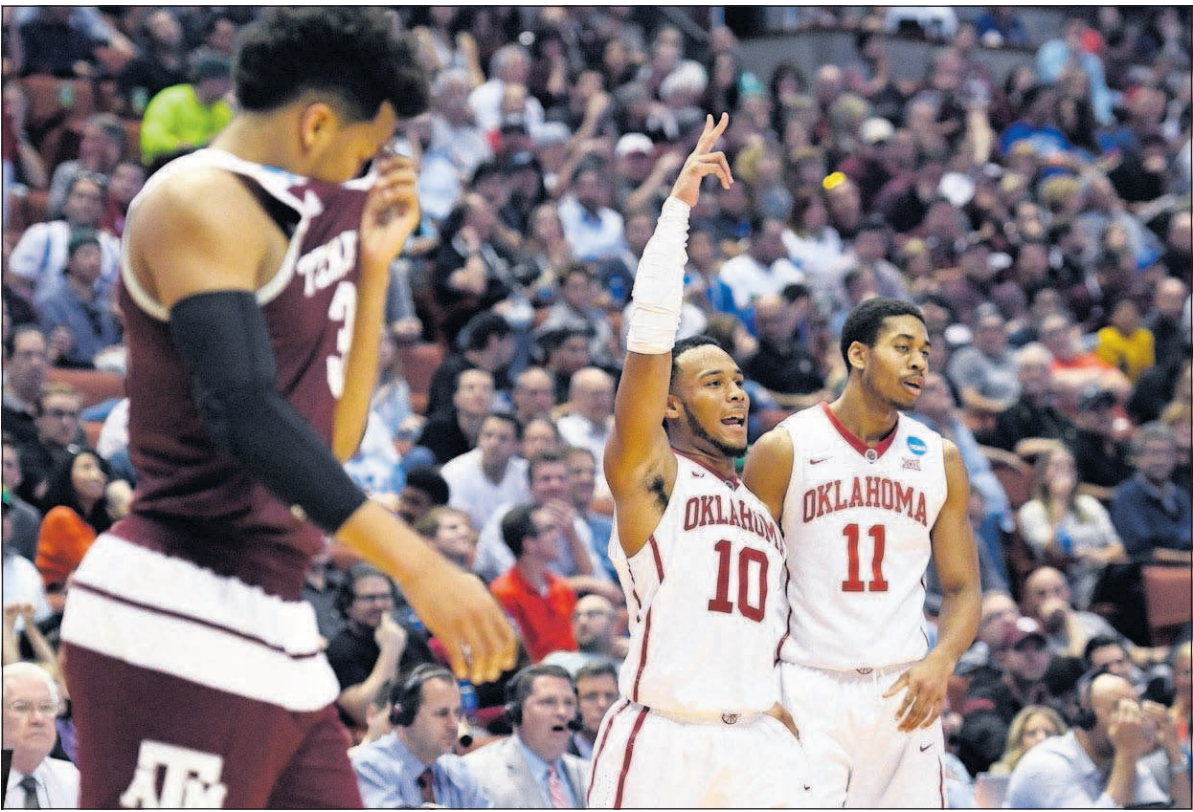
"We shared the ball really well," he said. "I'm real proud of the guys for stepping up and making shots. We were just taking advantage of opportunities. We tried to drive-and-kick and when they doubled somebody I tried to make the right pass."

Oklahoma lost to North Carolina in the South Regional final in 2009. Oklahoma is trying to reach the Final Four for the first time since 2002, when it lost to Indiana in the national semifinals.

Tyler Davis scored 17 for A&M (28-9), which reached the Sweet 16 with a thrilling double-overtime victory against Northern Iowa after rallying from 12 points down in the final 44 seconds of regulation.

The Sooners made sure it would require a big comeback in this one. They blew open a close game by going on a 19-4 run during the last 7:42 of the first half to take a 45-26 lead. The Sooners forced the Aggies into bad shots and turnovers, and Woodard was the catalyst on offense.

Woodard started the decisive first half run with a 3-pointer and had



Oklahoma guard Isaiah Cousins (11) and guard Jordan Woodard celebrate as Texas A&M guard T.J. Distefano, left, wipes his face during the second half of an NCAA college basketball game in the regional semifinals of the NCAA Tournament, Thursday, March 24, 2016, in Anaheim, Calif.

another shot from behind the arc with 3:15 to go. He also fed Khadeem Lattin for a slam dunk and then hit a sweet, off-balance bank shot as the shot clock was close to expiring with about 20 seconds left.

The Aggies went more than seven minutes without a field goal.

SOUTH REGION

KANSAS 79, MARYLAND 63 — At Louisville, Ky., Perry Ellis scored 27 points to match a season high, Wayne Selden Jr. added 19 and top-seeded Kansas topped No. 5 Maryland for a 79-63 NCAA Tournament South Region semifinal victory Thursday night. The win put the Jayhawks back into the Elite 8 for the first time since 2012.

It took time for the Jayhawks (33-4) to get going, but once they finally seized the lead late in the first half everything else fell into place for their 17th straight victory. They emerged from the break to make their first six shots and steadily take control



Miami guard Angel Rodriguez (13) goes in for a layup past Villanova forward Daniel Ochefu during an NCAA college basketball game in Louisville, Ky., Thursday. Villanova won 92-69.

behind senior forward Ellis, who made 10 of 17 from the field.

Selden was right there with 7-of-16 shooting to help Kansas earn a berth in Saturday's regional final against Villanova.

The Terrapins (27-9) dictated the early tempo and briefly engaged in a back-and-forth game with the Jayhawks before eventually falling

behind the tournament favorite. Rasheed Sulaimon led Maryland with 18 points.

Landen Lucas added 14 points and 11 rebounds while Frank Mason III had 11 points for Kansas, which outworked Maryland 43-28 on the glass and outscored the taller Terps 40-28 in the paint.

Better shooting also helped the

Women's College Basketball

Pac-12 living up to its billing in NCAA tournament

By TIM BOOTH
AP Sports Writer

Throughout the season, the metrics kept saying the Pac-12 Conference was the best in the country.

When it came time to back it up in the NCAA Tournament, the Pac-12 delivered.

Pac-12 teams will make up 25 percent of the Sweet 16 when the women's regional semifinals get started Friday. No. 2 seed Oregon State, No. 3 seed UCLA, No. 4 seed Stanford and No. 7 seed Washington all advanced through the first weekend of the tournament, giving the Pac-12 four teams in the final 16 for the first time in conference history. The league had never advanced more than three teams beyond the first weekend.

"It's awesome for the Pac-12 to have four teams in the Sweet 16. We only started with five to begin with," Stanford coach Tara VanDerveer said. "I think it's a big statement. I think the win by Washington is huge.

... I think people really took care of business and that's awesome. But we know we've been playing against good teams."

Oregon State romped into the regional semis a year after getting upset in the second round. UCLA and Stanford both held off upset bids on their home courts. And Washington pulled the surprise of the first two rounds by taking out two-time Final Four participant Maryland on the Terrapins' home floor.

The only stumble came from No. 2 seed Arizona State, which saw its run end with a second-round loss to perennial power Tennessee.

While the Pac-12 fell on its face in the men's tournament with six of seven teams eliminated on the opening weekend, the women's teams are living up to their billing. The SEC is the only other conference to advance four teams to the regional semifinals.

"I was hoping for five," VanDerveer said. "I think ASU played a team that



In this March 21, 2016, file photo, The UCLA bench cheers as they build a double-digit lead in the first half against South Florida during a second-round game in the NCAA Tournament in Los Angeles.

in a lot of ways is a really talented team and they just played really well."

Here's a look at the four remaining Pac-12 teams:

OREGON STATE: A season ago, the Beavers were the upstarts looking to the NAAs as the next step in their progression to becoming an elite program, only to get upset in the second round on their home floor by Gonzaga.

That lesson has hung with Oregon State all season and when the same situation presented itself again, the Beavers made quick work of St. Bonaventure.

"We know we didn't want it to feel like that again," Pac-12 player of the year Jamie Weisner said. "We didn't focus on the past. We focused on what we had to do going forward."

The Beavers have what

appears to be the easiest matchup of the remaining Pac-12 teams, facing No. 6 seed DePaul in the regional semis, but a win there would likely set up a regional final against Baylor in Dallas.

UCLA: The Bruins are in the Sweet 16 for the first time in 17 years thanks to guard Jordin Canada. Held in check by South Florida for three quarters of the second-round matchup, Canada scored 17 of her 19 points in the fourth quarter as the Bruins held on.

The last time UCLA reached the regional semifinals was 1999, when the Bruins lost to Louisiana Tech in the regional final. The Bruins' reward for getting this far is facing No. 2 seed Texas in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and the winner likely getting a date with undefeated UConn.

STANFORD: The Cardinal needed a late rally and Lili Thompson's three-point play in the closing seconds to beat No. 12 seed South Dakota State in the second round. Stanford did not win a share of the regu-

lar-season conference title or the conference tournament for the first time since 2000. But the Cardinal are in the Sweet 16 for a ninth straight season.

Stanford has the most difficult challenge in the regional semis, facing No. 1 seed Notre Dame.

WASHINGTON: The Huskies are the surprise of the four after beating Maryland in the second round. It's been 15 years since the Huskies last made the regional semifinals, but with a scorer like Kelsey Plum anything is possible with the Huskies. Plum had 32 points in the win over Maryland and will need another big game when Washington faces No. 3 seed Kentucky on the Wildcats' home floor.

"We felt like the Pac-12 Conference schedule and conference tournament particularly had really gotten us prepared for (the Maryland) game and that weekend and the way it all unfolded it turned out to be 100 percent true," Washington coach Mike Neighbors said.

Oregon forward Jordan Bell, left, and forward Elgin Cook, right, blocks a shot by Duke guard Grayson Allen during the second half of an NCAA college basketball game in the regional semifinals of the NCAA Tournament, Thursday, March 24, 2016, in Anaheim, Calif.



AP Photo/Mark J. Terrill

DUCKS: Oregon breaks single-season win record

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icance of playing Duke, defending national title, all the Final Fours, all the national championships that their program has been able to win. It was a different feel to it."

Oregon was the champion of the first NCAA Tournament in 1939, but hasn't been back to the Final Four since. The Ducks advanced to the Elite Eight for the first time since 2007 and the third time since 2002.

Brooks hit four 3-pointers to lead the Ducks, who also broke the school's single-season wins record with their 31st. They've won 10 straight since mid-February while winning the Pac-12's regular-season and tournament titles.

"They're not that deep," Brooks said of the Blue Devils. "I think (Grayson) Allen played the whole game. They've really only got seven guys. We knew they were bound to get tired. We just kept going and kept going, knowing they'd wear out. ... Some of them, their shoulders started to sag. Once they got tired we could see it."

Freshman Brandon Ingram scored 24 points, but Duke fell short of its third Elite Eight trip in five years — and both coaches agreed the better team won.

Allen, the Blue Devils' leading scorer, got 12 of his 15 points in the second half, but Duke couldn't make much progress in the second half.

"They're an athletic team, and that plays into their defense," said Allen, who went 4 for 13. "I also thought we missed some shots around the rim. Could have gone up stronger to finish, but give them credit for going up to challenge us."

Coach Mike Krzyzewski still emerged proud of his young roster after losing five of its final 10 games.

"They were the better team, that was pretty obvious," Krzyzewski said. "They knocked us back. They were always in control of the game. Right at the end, I thought we could do a Texas A&M (comeback) ... but then amazing things have to happen."

Oregon jumped out to an 11-point lead after back-to-back 3-pointers by Casey Benson and Chris Boucher, and they got the arena rocking with back-to-back fast-break dunks from Bell and Cook moments later.

KOBE IN THE HOUSE
Kobe Bryant and Apple CEO Tim Cook watched the game from a Duke fan section, while Nike's Phil Knight was among the Oregon contingent. Rams running back and Duke basketball fan Todd Gurley also attended the game.

BRANDON'S BOW
Ingram had an outstanding NCAA Tournament, scoring 69 points in Duke's three games. If the skinny 18-year-old forward heads to the NBA as expected, he's likely to be a top-three pick after showing incredible promise in his only season in Durham. "I'm not really worried about that right now," Ingram said of the NBA. "I'm worried about finishing up school and being with my guys. I love this team and I'd do anything for this team."