

WOMEN'S FINAL FOUR | RECAPS



AP Photo/Ron Schwane
Notre Dame celebrates after defeating Connecticut in overtime in the semifinals of the women's NCAA Final Four college basketball tournament Friday in Columbus, Ohio. Notre Dame won 91-89.

Notre Dame beats UConn on last-second shot in overtime

By **DOUG FEINBERG**
Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Arike Ogunbowale's jumper from the corner with a second left lifted Notre Dame to a 91-89 overtime victory over UConn on Friday night in the national semifinals.

She finished with 27 points and Jackie Young had a career-high 32 to lead the Irish back to the championship game for the first time since 2015.

"I know I just had to shoot it at the last minute," Ogunbowale said. "I didn't want to give them a chance to get the ball. I went into Mamba mentality. Kobe's here, so that's what I tried to channel."

It's the second consecutive year an undefeated UConn team lost in the Final Four on a last-second shot in overtime. Last time it was Mississippi State and Morgan William, ending the Huskies' 111-game win streak.

"There's nothing you can say to a college kid after experiencing this two years in a row that's going to make them feel any better about, you know," Geno Auriemma said. "We had an amazing run for five months. That's just

the way it is. One weekend in March gets to decide your season."

The Irish will face the Bulldogs — who won again in OT earlier Friday — on Sunday night in the title game. Muffet McGraw's squad will be looking for its second national championship to go with the one the Irish won in 2001.

Ogunbowale had a chance to seal the game in the final minute of overtime, but she missed two free throws. Crystal Dangerfield then hit a 3-pointer to tie it at 89, setting up the fantastic finish. The Huskies threw the ball down the court after the 3, but didn't get a chance to tie it.

"We were a little dejected at the end of regulation, but Arike I think was madder than anyone," McGraw said. "She wanted the ball in her hands and we put it there for the end of the game."

This was the latest chapter in the greatest current rivalry in women's basketball. The sellout crowd that included Lakers great Kobe Bryant, who was sitting behind the Huskies bench with his wife and daughters, saw quite the show with epic comebacks from both teams.

UConn was down five with under a minute to go in regulation before Napheesa Collier hit a 3-pointer with 15 seconds left and Kia Nurse had a steal for a layup a few seconds later to tie it. After Notre Dame turned it over with 3.6 seconds left in regulation, Gabby Williams' runner was short, sending the game to overtime.

The teams traded shot for shot in overtime before the Irish led 86-84 with 2:37 left in the extra period. Young then made three free throws over the next 2 minutes to give the Irish a five-point lead with 43 seconds left.

Collier then scored to make it a three-point game. Ogunbowale missed her two free throws a few seconds later. She atoned 37 seconds after a Notre Dame timeout with the shot that set off a wild celebration from the Irish faithful that made the trip.

"I practice this all the time," Ogunbowale said. "It's everyone's dream to get a game-winning shot, so you practice this in the gym when you're by yourself. So I was prepared for this moment."



AP Photo/Ron Schwane
Members of Mississippi State celebrate after defeating Louisville in the semifinals of the women's NCAA Final Four college basketball tournament Friday in Columbus, Ohio. Mississippi State won 73-63 in overtime.

Mississippi State earns second straight trip to women's final

By **MITCH STACY**
Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Once Roshunda Johnson hit the tying 3-pointer with seven seconds left in regulation and Teaira McCowan forced a miss on the other end, Mississippi State knew it was in good shape.

"We know we're an overtime team," All-American guard Victoria Vivians said. Especially in the Final Four.

McCowan had 21 points and a Final Four-record 25 rebounds, Vivians scored 25 points, and Mississippi State reached the national championship game for the second straight year with a 73-63 OT win over Louisville on Friday night.

After Johnson's jumper, Louisville's Myisha Hines-Allen then drove the length of the floor but missed a layup with McCowan defending her.

In overtime, the Bulldogs asserted themselves and Morgan William, who hit the game-winning shot in OT last year in the Final Four to end UConn's 111-game winning

streak, made two free throws in the last minute to help Mississippi State (37-1) pull away.

Louisville (36-3) managed just one basket on 10 shots in the extra period.

McCowan broke the rebounding mark set by Charlotte Smith of North Carolina in 1994 when Mississippi State's 6-foot-7 center grabbed her 24th board.

"She's done that all year against the best competition," Mississippi State coach Vic Schaefer said. "She did it again tonight on the biggest stage."

The Cardinals were hurt when center Sam Fuehring was called for a technical foul with 2:42 left in the fourth quarter when she slapped the floor after getting called for a foul. That technical fouled her out of the game. The Cardinals were down 54-53 and William hit both free throws to give the Bulldogs a three-point lead.

"It's a shame it has to come down to that," Louisville coach Jeff Walz said. "It was a five-point swing. So it impacted the game."

Louisville came back to take a 59-56 advantage on Hines-Allen's layup with 11

seconds left, setting up the exciting finish in regulation.

Asia Durr scored 18 for Louisville (36-3), which was making its third appearance in the Final Four. Jazmine Jones added 15 in a game in which the lead changed 15 times.

"It was really tough," Jones said. "They have great guards up and down their team. Victoria (Vivians), she's a great player. She was an All-American. It was really tough guarding her. And their 3-point shooters, because they can spread out the floor while driving. So it was really tough tonight."

BIG PICTURE
LOUISVILLE: The Cardinals won the ACC regular season and conference tournament for the first time in school history. They also earned the first No. 1 seed in program history, but couldn't get shots to fall in OT or keep McCowan off the boards all night.

"What a great ballgame," Walz said. "I mean, back and forth runs by both teams. It was a great ballgame. I thought we competed, we played our hearts out. I thought they played their hearts out."

MEN'S FINAL FOUR | PREVIEWS

A guide to teams, players and coaches in Final Four

By **JOHN MARSHALL**
Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — The maddest of Marches is winding down, the college basketball season now headed into April. All those upsets, crazy finishes and stellar performances have brought us to San Antonio, where a Cinderella and its telegenic nun join three power programs in the Final Four.

Based on the way the bracket has gone so far, don't be surprised if there is more madness in store.

To get you ready, we've got a rundown of the teams, the top players, the coaches and other tidbits about this year's Final Four.

THE TEAMS

Villanova. The Wildcats shoot 3s like no other, play suffocating defense and have that look — the one they had winning a national title two years ago.

Kansas. The other No. 1 seed to get through, the offensively-gifted Jayhawks are back in San Antonio, where Bill Self won his only title in 2008.

Michigan. Stingy D or raining 3s, these scrappy Wolverines find ways to win.

Loyola-Chicago. Sister Jean gets much of the attention, but the Ramblers have rambled into the Final Four with a free-flowing, nothing-to-lose style.

TOP PLAYERS

Jalen Brunson, Villanova. The Wildcats' unassuming, unquestionable leader is racking up player of the year awards — and possibly a second national championship.

Devonte' Graham, Kansas. Similar attributes as Brunson, only with an added dash of dynamic-ness.

Moritz Wagner, Michigan. The big German is crafty inside, can step out to hit 3s, can guard multiple positions — a matchup nightmare.

Clayton Custer, Loyola. The sharp-shooting guard gets mistaken for a non-player off the court, and is often the best in the game on it.

KEY CONTRIBUTORS

Cameron Krutwig, Loyola. The burly freshman gives the little Ramblers the presence they need inside at both ends.



AP Photo/Eric Gay
Loyola-Chicago head coach Porter Moser talks to Lucas Williamson during a practice session in San Antonio.



AP Photo/David J. Phillip
Michigan guard Jaaron Simmons dunks the ball during a practice session in San Antonio Friday.



AP Photo/David J. Phillip
Villanova head coach Jay Wright answers questions after a practice session for the Final Four Thursday.



AP Photo/Eric Gay
Kansas's Devonte' Graham answers questions after a practice session for the Final Four Thursday in San Antonio.

Today, 3:09 PM on TBS
No. 11 Loyola-Chicago (32-5)
vs. No. 3 Michigan (32-7)



Today 5:49 PM on TBS
No. 1 Kansas (31-7)
vs. No. 1 Villanova (34-4)

THE COACHES

Bill Self, Kansas. This may be the best coaching job of his Hall of Fame career.

Jay Wright, Villanova. The coolest — and best-dressed — coach in college basketball has changed the game and put the Wildcats in position for a second national title in three years.

John Beilein, Michigan. Redefined his team and himself by turning the Wolverines into one of the nation's top defensive teams.

Porter Moser, Loyola. A nation of college basketball fans are learning what everyone at Loyola already knew: Moser can flat-out coach.

NUMBERS

4 — No. 11 seeds to reach the Final Four: LSU (1986), George Mason (2006), VCU (2011) and Loyola (2018).

29 — Years since Michigan's lone NCAA title.

43.2 — Percentage of Michigan's shots taken from 3-point range.

55 — Years since Loyola's lone NCAA championship.

77.2 — Shooting percent of Kansas big man Udoka Azubuike, leading the nation.

86.6 — Points per game by Villanova, tops in Division I.

FAMOUS ALUMNI

Michigan: Actors James Earl Jones, Gilda Radner, Lucy Liu; H&R Block founder Henry R. Bloch; iPod inventor Tony Fadell; Walgreen's founder Charles Walgreen; playwright Arthur Miller; Nobel Prize winner Stanley Cohen; singer Madonna; NFL player Tom Brady; MLB player Derek Jeter; President Gerald Ford.

Villanova: Actors Bradley Cooper and Maria Bello; country singer Toby Keith; singer Jim Croce; second lady of the United States Jill Biden; Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell; Connecticut Gov. John G. Rowland; NFL Hall of Famer Howie Long.

Kansas: Actors Paul Rudd, Jason Sudeikis, Scott Bakula and Mandy Patinkin; NBA Hall of Famer Wilt Chamberlain; NFL Hall of Famer Gale Sayers; Kansas Sen. Bob Dole; FBI Director Clarence Kelley; basketball inventor Dr. James Naismith; golfer Gary Woodland.

Loyola: Actors Bob Newhart, Leslie David Baker and Jennifer Morrison; Chicago Bears owner George Halas Jr.; Chicago Cubs owner Todd Ricketts; Disturbed singer David Draiman; Smashing Pumpkins and Perfect Circle guitarist James Iha; Dr. Scholl's founder William Scholl; US Secretary of Commerce William M. Daley.