

# SELECTION DAY '08

## EAST REGIONAL

**1. UNC** (32-2)  
Coppin State's back in Raleigh, but not for long. The Heels' march to San Antonio begins.

**16. Coppin State** (16-20)

**8. Indiana** (25-7)  
IU freshman Eric Gordon might be the best player at the subregional. That includes you-know-who.

**9. Arkansas** (22-11)

**1. UNC**  
Dan Dakich ended Michael Jordan's college career and the Heels can end Dakich's interim gig with his alma mater, which will be looking for a bigger name after this loss.

**8. Indiana**

**1. UNC**  
Classic committee logic at work here: excellent offensive team vs. excellent defensive team. The Cougars want to play in the 50s, while the Heels want to run in the 80s or better. Plus, the commute for the Heels will be a tad easier than the Cougs' cross-country trek from Pullman.

**5. Notre Dame** (24-7)  
Could George Mason be this year's George Mason? Notre Dame stud Luke Harangody says no.

**12. George Mason** (23-10)

**4. Washington State** (24-8)  
Don't pick a team a year late. Winthrop won in Washington in 2007 but won't against Wazzou.

**13. Winthrop** (22-11)

**5. Notre Dame**  
The Irish went 17-0 at home but 7-7 elsewhere. Bad road teams don't last long in March. An OT loss to Vandy kept Wazzou out of the Sweet 16 in 2007. Not this time.

**4. Washington State**

**4. Wash. State**  
The Tar Heels beat one orange team in the ACC Tournament final in the same building. They'll do the same against another orange team. In the immortal words of "Teen Vogue" bracket expert Mandy Jensen, "We do not do orange." And it won't hurt the Heels that Ty Lawson should be back up to almost full speed, which means they will outrun the Vols.

**6. Oklahoma** (22-11)  
Oklahoma's bionic Blake Griffin is too much for the Hawks, who have limped to a 6-7 finish.

**11. St. Joseph's** (21-12)

**3. Louisville** (24-8)  
Boise State's three best players are forwards. That's the wrong formula for March.

**14. Boise State** (26-6)

**6. Oklahoma**  
Louisville's losses are more interesting than its wins, but the Cards closed the regular season 9-1 and the Sooners are just a one-man show in Blake Griffin.

**3. Louisville**

**3. Louisville**  
The coaching gauntlet is set for Tennessee's Bruce Pearl: first, Rick Pitino and then Roy Williams. The Vols will squeeze by the Cards like Pearl squeezed ESPN's Erin Andrews after beating Memphis. The Cards just don't have a match for UT's Chris Lofton and JaJuan Smith.

**7. Butler** (29-3)  
Butler has won at least one tournament game in its past three tournaments. Make it four.

**10. South Alabama** (26-6)

**2. Tennessee** (29-4)  
Jeff Jones, who took UVa to the tourney five times, leads the Eagles to a quick hello-goodbye.

**15. American** (21-11)

**7. Butler**  
Brad Stevens, 31, is the same age as Branch McCracken was when he won the 1940 NCAA Tournament with Indiana by beating Phog Allen. Branch's record lives another year.

**2. Tennessee**

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**1. UNC**  
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**1. UNC**

## ACCNOW INTERACTIVE BRACKET

Pick your NCAA men's basketball tournament bracket at [www.newsobserver.com](http://www.newsobserver.com) for your chance to win a \$100 prepaid gift card.

**1. Kansas**

**1. UCLA**

What a coincidence: It's Roy Williams and Kansas. Finally. It only took five years, but the Tar Heels and Jayhawks fulfill the CBS prophecy and meet in the Final Four. Like the last UNC team to make the national semifinals in San Antonio, these Heels are good enough to get there but not good enough to win. Then there's the curse of Mahktar Ndiaye, but that's a different storyline.

**1. Kansas**  
With just a little more courage, we'd ride the Zags to the Final Four, but Kansas has more parts and better parts than Gonzaga. Kansas star Brandon Rush's miracle recovery from a summer knee injury makes for great copy, but it will be the secondary storyline when the Jayhawks arrive in San Antonio with O' Roy and the Tar Heels awaiting.

**1. Kansas** (31-3)  
A crush of support from Kurt Cobain fans carries Kansas past PSU, alma mater of Courtney Love.

**16. Portland State** (23-9)

**8. UNLV** (26-7)  
Wink Adams is the only holdover from last year's Sweet 16 for the Rebels. The Flash in a flash.

**9. Kent State** (28-6)

**1. Kansas**  
Kent coach Jim Christian wants a word with his AD, Laing Kennedy, a selection committee member who sentenced his upstart team to play Kansas in Omaha.

**9. Kent State**

**1. Kansas**  
In terms of talent per square inch, these two teams have the Palace at Auburn Hills covered. But poise, most notably in the form of free-throw shooting, and big-game experience all favor the Jayhawks, who faltered in the round of eight last season against UCLA.

**5. Clemson** (24-9)  
Any team that lost to N.C. State can't be good enough to win in the NCAA Tournament.

**12. Villanova** (20-12)

**4. Vanderbilt** (26-7)  
"Marg, that's enough," Siena coach Fran McCaffrey told his wife after a Feb. loss. Not yet for Siena.

**13. Siena** (22-10)

**5. Clemson**  
The Tigers' size and press wears down the 3-point loving Saints. And former UNC-Greensboro coach and current Siena coach Fran McCaffrey is right: "Marg, that's enough."

**13. Siena**

**5. Clemson**

**6. Southern California** (21-11)  
The Trojans eliminated Big 12 phenom Kevin Durant in 2007. Et tu, Michael Beasley? Nah.

**11. Kansas State** (20-11)

**3. Wisconsin** (29-4)  
Frank Robinson leads Fullerton into its first tourney since '78. Wrong sport. Forget the Titans.

**14. Cal-State Fullerton** (24-8)

**11. Kansas State**  
Wisconsin's coaching and size vs. Kansas State's talent. The Badgers have too many bodies to throw at Michael Beasley, whose next game will be in the NBA.

**3. Wisconsin**

**3. Wisconsin**  
Wisconsin's coaching advantage from the previous round is gone and the Zags are deeper and superior in talent. Jeremy Pargo did the heavy lifting in the early rounds, but freshman shooter Austin Daye, who is 6-10 but just 190 pounds, sends the Badgers back to Madison.

**7. Gonzaga** (25-7)  
Travel works against Bulldogs, but sometimes you have to zag when everyone else zigs.

**10. Davidson** (26-6)

**2. Georgetown** (27-5)  
Under the tried-and-true mascot theory, a Hoya beats a Retriever.

**15. Md-Balt. County** (24-8)

**7. Gonzaga**  
After outplaying Davidson's Stephen Curry, Gonzaga guard Jeremy Pargo does the same to Georgetown's backcourt, ditto for flighty Josh Heytvelt with the Hoyas' Roy Hibbert.

**2. Georgetown**

**7. Gonzaga**

**1. Kansas**

## OPENING-ROUND GAME DAYTON, OHIO

**Coppin State**

**Coppin State** (16-20)  
The Eagles started the season 3-19 and have gone 13-1 since, including four wins in Raleigh.

**Mount St. Mary's** (18-14)



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## SOUTH REGIONAL

**8. Miss. State**  
All the cowbells in Houston couldn't get the Bulldogs past the Spartans, who have been throwing every other bracket "expert" off the scent to this point with six Big Ten losses. And you thought our Gonzaga pick was crazy.

**5. Michigan State**

**8. Miss. State**  
Memphis fell one game short of the Final Four in '06 and '07. With a team free-throw percentage below 60, it won't get that far. The Dogs, and Jamont Gordon, pull the upset.

**5. Michigan State**

**1. Memphis** (33-1)  
The Mavs feature reserve forward Trey Parker but no Matt Stone. Respect Memphis' authority.

**16. Texas-Arlington** (21-11)

**8. Mississippi State** (22-10)  
Little bro' Ben Hansbrough gets his own shining moment vs. a team that shouldn't be in the field.

**9. Oregon** (18-13)

**5. Michigan State**  
In 2003, Rick Barnes led the Horns to the Final Four by beating Michigan State in San Antonio. This game is in Houston. What a difference five years makes. Betcha Tom Izzo will be thrilled about that. D.J. Augustin and A.J. Abrams can neutralize Drew Neitzel and history will repeat itself as the home-cooking carries the Horns to an even better Lone Star destination.

**5. Michigan State**  
It's time for Drew Neitzel to make a stand. The Spartans are 1-2 since the 2005 Final Four loss to UNC and have too much talent to lose to the upstart Golden Eagles.

**5. Michigan State**

**5. Michigan State** (25-8)  
Fran Dunphy went 1-9 with Penn in the tourney. Tom Izzo is 24-9 with four Final Fours.

**12. Temple** (21-12)

**2. Texas**

**3. Stanford**  
Not even Tiger Woods can help the Cardinal shoot the Longhorns out of their 2-3 zone. The speed-challenged Pac-10 team doesn't have a defense to slow down Texas wunderguard D.J. Augustin. The Houston setting doesn't help Stanford either. Hook 'em, Dano.

**6. Marquette**  
A Pac-10 vs. Big East showdown with Stanford's Lopez twins, Brook and Robin, presenting Marquette, a guard-heavy team, with matchup problems.

**3. Stanford**

**6. Marquette** (24-9)  
With Patrick Patterson, maybe Kentucky lives to see another round – not without him.

**11. Kentucky** (18-12)

**2. Texas**

**2. Texas**  
Half of the Gaels' wins came against teams ranked 201 or higher in the RPI. That's a lot of fat to trim. There's no such cholesterol on the Horns' resume.

**10. Saint Mary's**

**11. Kentucky** (18-12)  
Since this confounds mascot experts – Cardinal, Big Red – go with the better team.

**3. Stanford** (26-7)

**2. Texas**

**2. Texas**  
Governors coach Dave Loos is too close to loss. Let's Go (home) Peay.

**10. Saint Mary's** (25-6)

**7. Miami** (22-10)  
Put another shrimp on the barbie, the Gaels' Aussie-based lineup trumps the Canes.

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## WEST REGIONAL

**1. UCLA**  
What a regional, wow! Sixteen combined national titles among UCLA (11), Duke (3) and UConn (2). The Bruins, while geographically in the Pac-10, are just a Big East team with good Vitamin D. While officiating will play the proper role, the Bruins' experience wins out.

**4. Connecticut**

**1. UCLA**  
Given BYU's lack of backcourt production, this game will turn into a rout by UCLA's standards, meaning it will be 71-47 and the Bruins move on to Phoenix.

**8. Brigham Young**

**1. UCLA** (31-3)  
The Delta Devils began the season with 11 straight losses to Division I teams. They end it with one.

**16. Miss. Valley State** (19-15)

**1. UCLA**  
The Celtics would have trouble beating Duke and UCLA in back-to-back games. Duke will be a brawl for the Muskies and the Bruins are even tougher than the Devils. Plus, Sean Miller has already taken his team Phoenix once this season and ended up losing by 22 points to Arizona State. The Bruins make it three straight trips to the Final Four.

**4. Connecticut**

**5. Drake**  
You can't like the odds of a team with a coach named Keno. Drake's Keno Davis has taken the Bulldogs, whose star Adam Emmenecker is a former walk-on, as far as they can go.

**4. Connecticut**

**8. Brigham Young** (27-7)  
The Cougars win one for their men's volleyball team, which somehow landed on NCAA probation.

**9. Texas A&M** (24-10)

**3. Xavier**  
The tournament gods owe the Musketeers after last year's no-call on Greg Oden's obvious intentional foul in the Muskies' second-round loss to Ohio State.

**4. Connecticut**

**4. Connecticut**  
Don't be fooled by the Toreros, they won their conference tourney on their home court.

**13. San Diego** (21-13)

**3. Xavier**

**3. Xavier**

**11. Baylor**

**5. Drake** (28-4)  
Directional Kentucky schools are 0-5 this decade in the NCAA Tournament. Make that 0-6.

**12. Western Kentucky** (27-6)

**3. Xavier**

**3. Xavier**

**3. Xavier**

**4. Connecticut** (24-8)  
Baylor needed five overtimes to beat Texas A&M. It won't take that long to bounce the Boilers.

**11. Baylor** (21-10)

**3. Xavier**

**2. Duke**

**7. West Virginia**

**6. Purdue** (24-8)  
The Dawgs won an unbelievable three games in two days, but they've already had their day.

**14. Georgia** (17-16)

**3. Xavier**

**2. Duke**

**7. West Virginia**

**3. Xavier** (27-6)  
Arizona, which played in Raleigh in '04 and Philly in '06, keeps racking up the frequent-flyer miles.

**10. Arizona** (19-14)

**3. Xavier**

**2. Duke**

**2. Duke**

**2. Duke** (27-5)  
The Bruins will win the national championship. Sorry, wrong Bruins.

**15. Belmont** (25-8)