

LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice Sports

MARCH MADNESS!!!

By W.G. Ramirez

Can you translate 64 teams sprinkled over eight regional sites across America into a Final Four at Minneapolis.

Obviously the projected final four would be the four No. 1 seeds - Duke in the East, UCLA in the West, Ohio St. in the Southeast and Kansas in the Midwest.

Well history tells us that despite the best intentions of the committee and the easiest path through the NCAA minefield, the top seeds often go astray.

Since the seeding system began in 1979, all four favorites never have managed to escape the upset-bug and make their way through the 60 other teams as a group to reach the final four together.

Duke will try to do what UNLV couldn't do last year - run the season as No. 1 and defend its national championship.

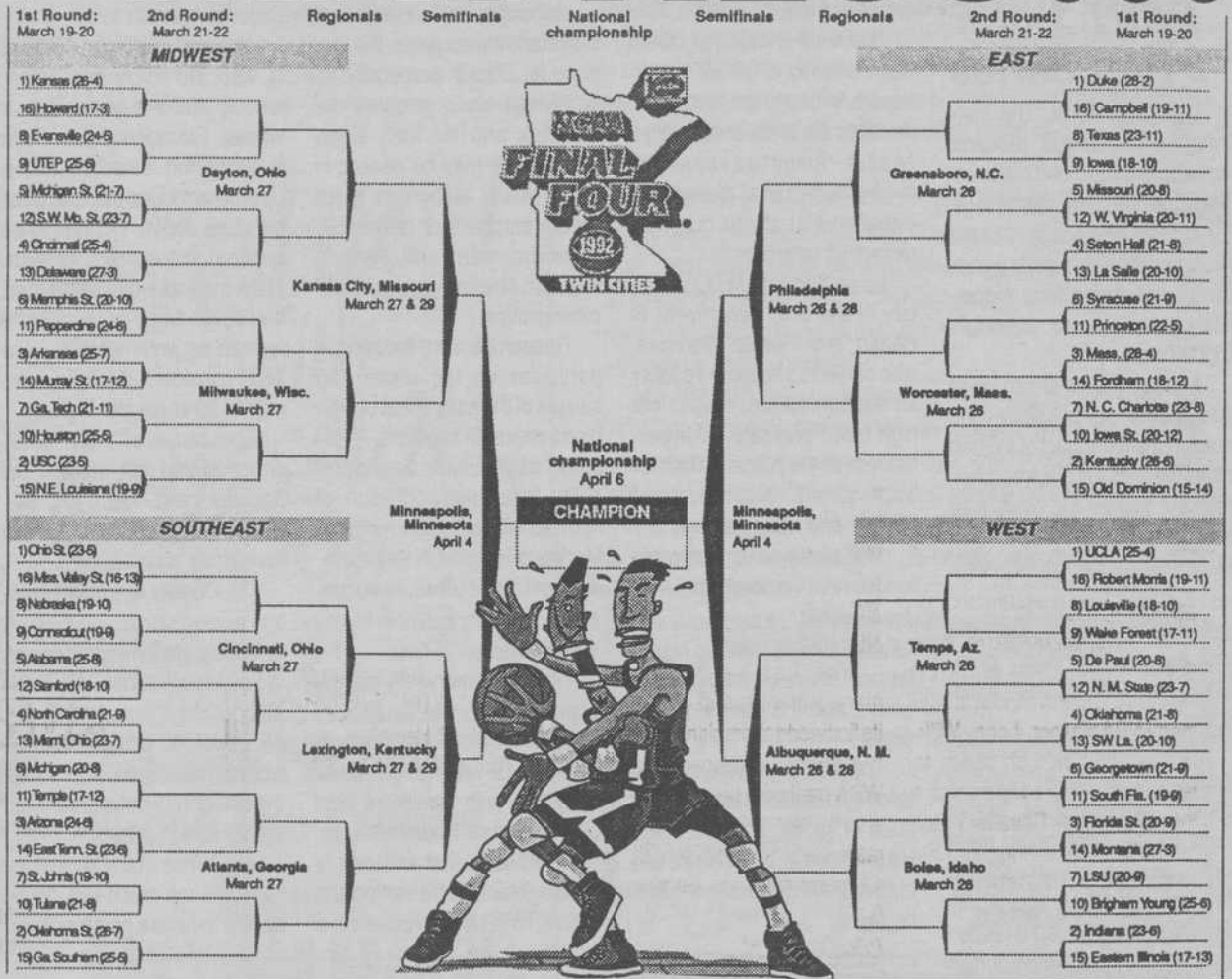
The Blue Devils were ranked No. 1 in the preseason and stayed there through last Monday's 17th and final regular-season voting.

The last team to go No. 1 start-to-finish and win the national championship was Indiana in 1976. The Hoosiers were the last team to go unbeaten, something UNLV missed last season by one game, which was a loss to Duke in the national semi-finals.

UNLV is the only member of the final AP Poll not going to the NCAA tournament.

One local expert, B.D. Williams, sees all the No. 1 and 2 seeds advancing to the regional finals except in the midwest, where he likes Georgia Tech to challenge Kansas in the final.

According to B.D., Kansas, Ohio St., Duke and Indiana will all advance to the final four with Duke and Ohio St., the only repeat #1 seed from last year, to face off for the national championship.



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