

### My 2009 Bracket, Part Two

by Joe Mulder

We left off yesterday, you'll recall, at the Sweet Sixteen. Let's power through the rest of my tournament picks, shall we? As I did yesterday, I'll just let you in on the tough processes\* that went into my picks...

\*If any

#### SWEET SIXTEEN

(1) Louisville over (4) Wake Forest

Seems like Louisville is destined for big things this year, doesn't it?

(3) Kansas over (10) USC

For those of you who missed yesterday's column, I went to USC; that's really the only reason anybody would have them in the Sweet Sixteen. They won't beat Kansas, though. I mean, they may not beat Boston College in Round 1. But they really won't beat Kansas.

(1) UConn over (4) Washington

I'm not really picking many upsets, am I? I suppose that's the safest way to go.

(2) Memphis over (3) Missouri

Yeah, I'm just looking at my picks in this bracket, and I've got No. 1 vs. No. 4, and No. 2 vs. No. 3. Not really going out on any limbs there. I decided I was bullish on Memphis for some reason, though, so I'm sticking to that.

(1) Pittsburgh over (5) Florida State

Spoiler alert: I think it's Pitt's year.

(2) Duke over (3) Villanova

If I had it to do over again, and if I'd have stopped to think about it (which is strictly against my own set of rules for filling out my NCAA tournament picks), this would be a good place to pick a mild upset; I don't think anybody's blown away by Duke this year. But what's done is done.

(1) North Carolina over (5) Illinois

I'm not wild about North Carolina, but they do have a player on their roster of whom I've actually heard, which if you remember yesterday's picks column is a key factor as far as I'm concerned.

(2) Oklahoma over (6) Arizona State

This particular quadrant of the bracket is just crawling with players I've heard of; Oklahoma's got one too!

#### GREAT EIGHT

[I know most people say "Elite Eight;" I'll never get on board with that. That term is only used because both words start with "e," but the e's don't even make the same sound. It's stupid. "Great Eight" is better, assuming we even need a term from this level of the tournament at all; since the round of eight gets underway only a few hours after the round of sixteen finishes up, I submit that we could live without one. "The Round of Eight" would be fine, as far as I'm concerned]

(1) Louisville over (3) Kansas

Kansas's bid for a repeat ends here; they've lost too many key guys to do it again. At least it would make sense that they have; I don't really follow college basketball.

[note: if you bet on these games, it's probably not an incredibly good idea to use my picks as your one and only source of analysis]

(1) UConn over (2) Memphis

Because you've got to pick a couple of No. 1 seeds to not make the Final Four, right? Especially after last year, when they all made the Final Four. That's unlikely to happen again.

(1) Pittsburgh over (2) Duke

I could be wrong, but I don't think Pitt's been past the Sweet Sixteen since Nam; they're due.

(2) Oklahoma over (1) North Carolina

I was trying to think about it, and I don't know if it's just that Gonzaga's Adam Morrison tainted things for me or if there's a more extensive history of white Player of the Year candidates being disappointments in the NCAA tournament. Whatever the case, I'm hesitant to pick North Carolina and star Tyler Hansbrough to go very far. I say they don't make the Final Four. And yes, that's the actual reason for this pick; Adam Morrison's wispy mustache turned me off of teams led by white guys. Look; I told you I'm not a college basketball expert.

#### FINAL FOUR

(1) Louisville over (2) Memphis

*Sports Illustrated* had a piece last week about Louisville. Plus, Louisville is a No. 1 seed. That must mean that people who know more than I do think Louisville is good. Plus Memphis lost three guys to the pros from last year's team (or

## POOP READING

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so I believe I heard head coach John Calipari say in an Interview a few days ago).

(1) Pittsburgh over (2) Oklahoma

Like I said, I think this is the year that Pitt finally gets over the hump.

### CHAMPIONSHIP

(1) Pittsburgh over (1) Louisville

I have a friend named Joe, and he went to Pittsburgh (and USC and Michigan, but it's unlikely to the point of being nearly impossible that either of those two schools will get this far, so let's forget about them). He grew up in the region, too, and he's a big fan of all Pittsburgh sports. For a period of a few years back in the early part of the decade, we had a bit of a tradition of watching big games involving Pittsburgh teams together, and of having said Pittsburgh team lose in gut-wrenching fashion. I'm not sure anything can top the Steelers' home loss to the Patriots in the 2001 AFC title game for complete devastation (I still think of that as the "Grinch Game," because I'm convinced that Patriots wide receiver/special teamer Troy Brown's sack grew three sizes that day), but the 2002 Pitt overtime loss to Kent State in the Sweet Sixteen is right up there. Joe and I watched both of those games together, and I'm not sure I'll ever forgive myself. The Steelers loss can't sting quite as much now, since they've won two Super Bowls in the years since it happened. Now I just need the 2009 Pitt Panthers to help me wash off the lingering stink of that Kent State loss, and Joe and I should be all square.

And there you have it (or, I should say, there you have *them*): my 2009 NCAA tournament picks. Use them wisely, and for God's sake don't let them fall into the wrong hands. There's no telling what could happen.

Good luck in the office pool, and we'll see you next year.

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