



NCAA AND OTHER MADNESS

By Kerry Schmidt

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Before I get into the insanity that will take place over roughly 48 hours this weekend – from around 6 pm Saturday night until about 11 pm Monday night, EST.

We go into Tuesday to finish up the women's finals. NOTE: In some ways the women's games are more fun to watch.

All this will be boringly dissected after I get finished with the other madness.

Chris Henry, the ever so active WR of the Cincinnati Bengals. Or I should say, the former WR of the Bengals.

Cincinnati finally cut ole Chris loose last week. Why, you ask?

Well, seems he was arrested for the eighth time since 2005, 11 since he came out of college.

This was his 5th arrest in 15 months.

Seems he punched some 18-year old guy in the face outside a bar and then broke his car window with a beer bottle. He was arraigned Thursday.

At least he knows the routine of going to court.

He had been in court the week before after being arrested for driving with a suspended license.

Judge Bernie Bouchard set his bond at \$51,000 and deliberately noted his numerous other arrests, for things involving drugs, guns and alcohol.

He called Henry, "a one-man crime wave," and ordered him to have electronic monitoring if he made bail.

Ole Hank had been active in the past 18 months, and he did so in several states.

He was arrested for driving with suspended license plates in Kentucky, with a suspended driver's license in Michigan, carrying a concealed weapon in Florida, DUI in Ohio, then went back to Kentucky wherein he was arrested for providing alcohol to minors in a motel room. Hmmmm, wonder why he did that?

He was arrested five times in six months, from December 2005 to May, 2006. At least he's consistent!

Bengals' President Mike Brown, said Henry was often a brilliant receiver, but that "His conduct can no longer be tolerated." He went on to say that the Bengals had tried on several occasions to help Henry solve his problems, but "those efforts ended today," said Brown.

Henry had been suspended for the first half of last year for repeatedly violating NFL rules. He was also suspended for two games in 2006.

All this shows is that if a player is really good at helping a team win games, they will put up with a lot, but ole Henry really did a WHOLE LOT. It is unlikely any NFL team will touch him, given his record and further suspensions that would likely be forthcoming.

Maybe Henry can hook up with dogy-boy Vick and they can really have a good prison football team.

And, the baseball season opened this past week. PLAY BALL!

Some players and coaches, and my brother-in-law umpire were in mid-season form.

Ed Montague, the longest working ump in MLB at 32 years, threw out Dodgers' 3rd base coach, Larry Bowa, for bumping Ed, among other things.

Two innings into the season, and "you're outa here."

Also, reportedly, there was a sign at the Cubs game saying, naturally, "Wait 'Til Next Year."

Speaking of the Cubs, too bad ole Harry Carey is not still around announcing the games.



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I can assure you, since he mispronounced half the words in the English language, he would have a great time with the newest pitcher for the Cubbies, a Japanese named...KOSUKE FUKUDOME!

It has been pronounced Ko-suc-e (kosuckme) Fuk-u-do-me.

I can't wait for the first Cubs game on TV to see how the announcers dance around that. And, imagine what a wonderful time the fans will have with it.

Think there might be a few R-rated signs in the stadium?

OK, the finals of March Madness (MM).

Well, I'm guessing some 15-20 million bracket sheets have already been shredded, as those who were crazy enough to take all that time to try to figure out which teams will upset which powerhouses and all the other mysteries.

Virtually all of the selections usually have one or more major upsets predicted.

Most will include at least one of the lesser rated teams making the final four.

As most so called "experts" say, you have to predict some upsets. Dick Vitale, aka Super Mouth, even said, "There has never been a finals where all four top seeds made the final four, and that streak will continue this year."

He predicted two upsets.

Well Dickie boy, for the first time, all four No. 1 ranked teams did make it.

In fact, UCLA, Kansas, UNC and Memphis were the top four rated teams in the first pre-season poll!

Boring. Amazing, but boring.

Thus, you likely have very few who have all four finalists on there pick list.

So, with the best four teams playing, who will win?

I don't have a frickin clue. Don't really care either, but it will be fun to watch.

Three of the four teams have one player who really stands out.

UNC has Tyler Hansbrough, Memphis has freshman sensation Derrick Rose and UCLA has the top big man in the country, another freshman, Kevin Love.

Only Kansas does not have the one player that stands out emphatically, the one that all the talking heads mention.

And, as always, there are one or two sidelines that will be talked about. NOTE: Actually, everything you can imagine will be talked about, given the several hundred talking heads that will be on some TV and/or radio shows giving their "expert" opinions.

With some 48,000 in attendance in San Antonio, and an estimated 60 million who will watch nation-wide. Plus our great servicemen overseas.

UCLA and UNC, especially, and Kansas to a degree, are familiar names to many in the finals of MM.

UCLA, of course, under the legendary John Wooden, did something that will absolutely, positively NEVER be accomplished again.

The "Wizard of Westwood" led UCLA to 10 NCAA Championships, including an unbelievable seven consecutive titles! In 1995, UCLA won No. 11.

So, UCLA is certainly no stranger to the final four.

Neither is UNC, which has four national titles and Kansas has two.

Memphis is the lone "never won it" team. In fact, 1985 was the only time Memphis made it to the final four, and they were known as Memphis State at that time.

Thus, you could call them the Cinderella team, yet that would hardly be accurate as they had the best season record (37-1) of the four teams.



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Since that memorable '85 season, this is the first time they have been back. But during that one year, as player Andre Turner said, "When we played, people would stop working; in the barbershops, they'd stop cutting. It was all about us."

Memphis was not what you would call your powerhouse basketball town.

However, that '85 team, was at once both a team of triumph and one of tragedy.

Three of the star players on that team and head coach Dana Kirk and asst. coach Larry Finch did not fare so well after that year.

Center William Bedford is in prison on a drug conviction. Forward Baskerville Holmes (Someone had to be a Sherlock fan) killed his girlfriend and then committed suicide. Reserve guard Aaron Price was killed, a victim of a carjacking. Dana Clark served time in prison in a tax evasion case, and Larry Finch has had numerous strokes, leaving him paralyzed and unable to function.

Thus, unless you have ties to the other three, Memphis could be your team to root for.

If you're looking for another interesting sideline, you have UNC Coach Roy Williams. He was coach at Kansas for 13 years before leaving for his Alma Mater in 2003.

And, UNC and Kansas face each other in the second game Saturday night.

Many a Kansas fan have not yet forgiven Williams for leaving, so there could be some booing to go along with the other high-spirited emotions.

Then you have UCLA head Coach Ben Howland. This is his third straight final four appearance. In the previous two, he lost both times to Florida, once in the semis and then in the championship. At UCLA, anything less than that championship would be a failure to the Bruins' fans. No pressure there.

For Kansas' head Coach Bill Self is in his first final four after 15 years.

And Memphis Coach John Calipari built two teams from outside the so-called power leagues – Massachusetts of the Atlantic 10 and now Memphis of Conference USA and led both to the final four, but the title is what he needs.

The final factor may be the two highly talented freshmen, Love of UCLA and Rose of Memphis (others could well be in this discussion, but these two are front and center).

THE question is will these two be "one and done?" That is, will they bolt to the NBA after just their one season? If they decide to do so, both are projected to be high first round draft choices. So, do they forgo the college memories or go for the big bucks?

My guess is that at least Rose will go, and if Love's UCLA wins, he may also.

The NBA and NCAA, obviously, are not in favor of this one and done deal. Dave Stern, NBA Commissioner, is talking of passing a new rule forcing college players to, basically, stay two years.

Memphis' Calipari had the best comment on Rose. He said, "If he does what he feels is best for him and his family, he will go. But if he does what is best for me and my family, he will stay."

The final final is the betting on the tournament.

Again, as in the past, I contacted the guru of Las Vegas betting, Jay Kornegay, head of the Las Vegas Hilton race and sports book.

He says while the amount bet on the tournament is "nothing" compared to the Super Bowl, it still is a pretty decent week.

Besides the outcomes and over/unders, they have a few prop bets, like largest lead by any team, first team to score 10, then 20 points, over/under on 3-pointers, total points or rebounds or assists by a single player and so on.

He says that in the SB, there are over 160 prop bets, but only about 16 for the NCAA.

He could not tell me the total amount bet on this tournament, but he did say that in March, 228 million was bet on basketball, but that included the NBA.



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He added that of the total amounts bet on this tournament, Nevada wagering only counts for about 1 ½ % of all bets in the US.

Jay told me that he and his college buddies came to Vegas on his senior year spring bet. He fell in love with the gaming aspect of it, and, well, “here I am.”

He is widely regarded as THE best at setting up the odds, props and all assorted aspects of sports gambling in Vegas.

Well, enjoy the games! If you can stay up late enough. The final Monday night will start around 8 PM EST, thus will not end until near 11.

My pick? The winner of the UCLA/Memphis game. I think UCLA’s defense will stall out Memphis, but I hope Memphis finally gets the gold for the small town and conference.

Like the SB, fattening foods and plenty of cold beer. Enjoy.