

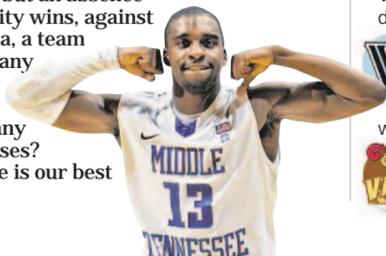
ncaa men's selection sunday

Today is the day. Sixty-eight teams will make the NCAA men's tourney. About 62 of them already know they will be in. More than 70 think they should be.

The bubble is crowded this year, thanks to the SEC's mediocrity.

The committee has a tough task. How do you compare teams such as Middle Tennessee State, which has a dazzling record but an absence of quality wins, against Virginia, a team with many quality wins and many bad losses?

Here is our best guess.



THE UNDERDOGS



» **South Dakota State:** Superstar Nate Wolters gives them a chance to beat anyone. Gave Baylor fits last season as a 14 seed.



» **Belmont:** Former A-Sun power has moved to the Ohio Valley, and they're still dangerous.



» **Villanova:** Beat Louisville, Georgetown and Syracuse when those teams were ranked in the top 5.



» **Valparaiso:** Bryce Drew coaching. Why not?

LAST FOUR IN

» **Boise State:** Will the committee take five teams from the Mountain West? It should. It's better than the SEC.

» **LaSalle:** Loss to Butler in Friday's Atlantic 10 quarterfinal shouldn't hurt the Explorers. They've done enough to get in.

» **Middle Tennessee State:** Yeah, we know. They have no good wins. But 28-5 and a 19-1 conference mark excite us more than 20-12 and 9-9.

» **Ole Miss:** The one SEC bubble team that played its way in.

FIRST FOUR OUT

» **Kentucky:** Had a chance to get in, but flopped against Vanderbilt.

» **Tennessee:** Had a chance to get in, but flopped against Alabama.

» **Alabama:** Had a chance to get in, but flopped against Florida.

» **Virginia:** Sorry Cavs. Lots of good wins, but too many ugly losses. And losing by 19 in the conference tourney? Ugh.

THE TOP SEEDS



» **Gonzaga:** The West Coast Conference is weak, but it's hard to ignore 31-2. They should be 32-1, but threw away the game against Butler.



» **Indiana:** Our pick to win the tournament, unless they run into Wisconsin.



» **Louisville:** Duke loss, comeback win over Syracuse elevates Cardinals.



» **Kansas:** Big 12 title and Duke loss should make Jayhawks top seed.

WHAT'S IN A NUMBER?



FGCU junior Christophe Varidel, center, leads his teammates in a pregame chant earlier this season in Alico Arena. KINFAY MOROTI/THE NEWS-PRESS

Seed could bear greatly on FGCU NCAA tourney success

INSIDE TODAY

The top moments, bios and how the team was built. » C4-5

COMING MONDAY

An 8-page section on FGCU and the NCAA tournament.

ONLINE

Follow FGCU and your favorite teams during March Madness at news-press.com/ncaa. Go to news-press.com tonight for video, photos as the Eagles find out who they will play.

By Seth Soffian
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FGCU sophomore Brett Comer and junior Chase Fieler got a good chuckle popping the substitution buzzer on the scoreboard each time freshman teammate Alex Blessig went up for a dunk, distracting the newbie just enough for the ball to pop out of his hand more than once.

After a full week of fairly relaxed practices, things are about to get a lot more serious for the Eagles.

More than a week after clinching an NCAA tournament berth in

only its second year eligible, FGCU tonight learns who it will face in the big dance, almost certainly in the Round of 64 on Thursday or Friday.

The Eagles (24-10) seem certain not to be deemed among the worst four automatic bids that get stuck in first-round "play-in" games Tuesday and Wednesday in Dayton, Ohio, against the worst four at-large selections.

Most hoops pundits project FGCU as a No. 15 seed, although some, the Eagles included, believe them deserving of a No. 14 seed at the least.

"I certainly don't think we're a

15 or 16 seed," said FGCU coach Andy Enfield, pointing to his squad's RPI of 92, early-season victory over ninth-ranked Miami and strong non-conference schedule that included trips to No. 2 Duke, No. 25 VCU, St. John's and Iowa State.

Mercer coach Bob Hoffman, whose Bears lost 88-75 to FGCU last Saturday on their home floor in the A-Sun final, points to his team's regular-season win at Alabama, 62nd in RPI, as more proof of FGCU's prowess.

"They could be as high as a 12

See EAGLES » C5

FGCU NCAA SELECTION SHOW WATCH PARTY

When: Sunday, doors open 5 p.m.

Where: Alico Arena

TV: CBS, 6-7 p.m.

Note: FGCU will be among the schools included in the live broadcast on CBS; player and coach introductions will be at 5:30 p.m.



ACC SEMIFINALS

» Durand Scott scores 32 points as No. 9 Miami beats N.C. State, earning its first trip to a championship game. » C6

» Dexter Strickland and Reggie Bullock score 15 points apiece and UNC hangs on to beat Maryland. » C6

» Final: 1 p.m. today, ESPN

BIG TEN SEMIFINALS

» Wisconsin earns its 12th consecutive win against Indiana off Ryan Evans' 16 points. » C6

» Aaron Craft comes through to lead No. 10 Ohio St. past No. 8 Michigan St. » C6

» Final: 3:30 p.m. today, CBS

SEC SEMIFINALS

» Kenny Boynton drops in 11 straight points to help No. 13 Florida rally against Bama. » C6

» Ole Miss is one win away from making sure its NCAA tournament berth is automatic. » C6

» Final: 1 p.m. today, ABC



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