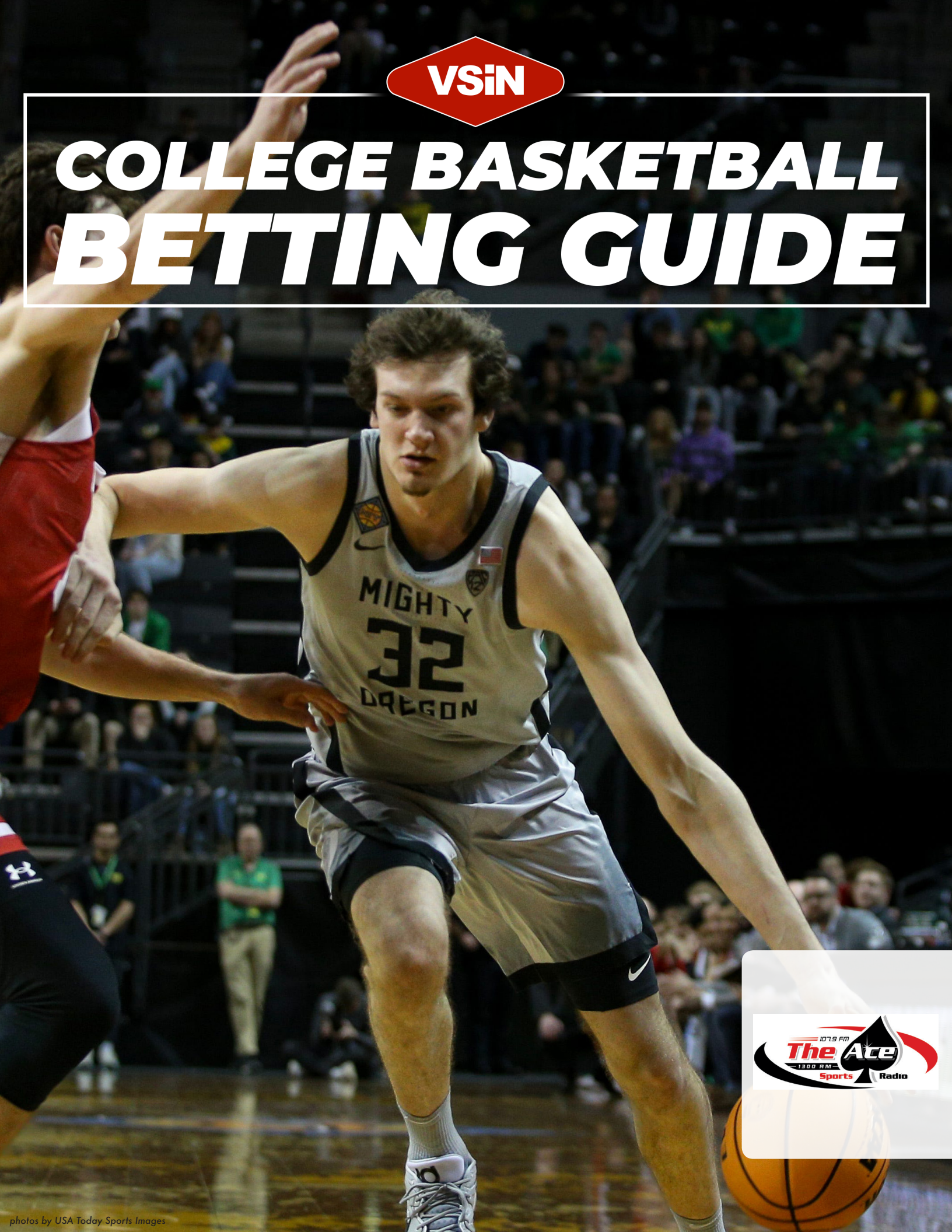


VSIN

COLLEGE BASKETBALL BETTING GUIDE



MATT YOUMANS' TOP 25 PRESEASON POLL



In the wild world of college basketball, the team that starts in the No. 1 spot rarely finishes on top, and last year's preseason rankings might have been the worst airball of them all.

Imagine a season when the preseason No. 1 team (North Carolina) missed the NCAA Tournament and an unranked team (Connecticut) won the national championship. The 2022-23 season was incredibly unpredictable for several reasons beyond the Tar Heels' bizarre demise and the Huskies' surprising rise.

The Associated Press Top 25 poll is a compilation of 62 voters from the media, and many of those voters have a regional bias, so the poll is inherently less accurate than Ken Pomeroy's analytics-based ratings or any given sharp handicapper's unbiased numbers.

Last year, almost every source had it wrong in early November, starting with North Carolina. The AP Top 25 failed to rank UConn and two of the other three Final Four teams, Florida Atlantic and Miami. San Diego State, which reached the title game, was ranked 19th in the AP poll. Pomeroy's preseason ratings showed Kentucky at No. 1 and UConn 27th.

My preseason ratings were not much better. I had Miami at No. 19, followed by San Diego State (23) and UConn (28). Purdue, unranked by the AP in the preseason and No. 22 in my ratings, started 21-1 and was the unanimous No. 1 in the AP poll in late January.

But preseason ratings are not always so off the mark. Kansas topped my power ratings for VSiN prior to the 2021-22 season — Gonzaga was the favorite by media and oddsmakers — and the Jayhawks cashed at 15-1 odds by beating the Tar Heels for the NCAA championship.

"This feels like a crazy year when we don't know who's going to be really good," Westgate SuperBook oddsmaker Ed Salmons said.

While it's possible, I highly doubt this season will be as crazy as the last. I believe this season will be far more predictable, based on stronger ratings on a majority of my top 10 teams. Kansas is the most popular pick for preseason No. 1 in 2023-24, but the Jayhawks are my No. 2.

My top team in the preseason is Michigan State, which was picked second behind Purdue in the Big Ten media poll. Spartans coach Tom Izzo has an experienced team that rates highly in all areas, and Izzo has a magic touch in March.



In his 28 years in East Lansing, Izzo has reached eight Final Fours. He has guided the Spartans to every NCAA Tournament since 1998, and Izzo will have a good shot to win it all for the first time since 2000.

“Izzo is due for a good year where things go his way,” said Circa Sports oddsmaker Nick Bogdanovich, who added the Spartans have been drawing sharp money on the futures board.

I bet Michigan State at 20-1 to win the national title in the summer — the best current odds (18-1) are available at the Westgate SuperBook. The Spartans are posted at 16-1 at Circa and 15-1 at DraftKings, which also offers +550 on Izzo’s team to reach the Final Four.

Preseason power ratings are obviously an inexact science and a team rating in November is based mostly on opinion. I rate teams in seven categories — coaching, backcourt, big men, experience, 3-point shooting, defense/rebounding, and depth — and the first three categories listed are weighted for more emphasis.

Michigan State, which returns five of the top six scorers from a 21-win team that reached the Sweet 16, earned the top score of 94 on my ratings (100 is the top of the scale).

Fifth-year senior Tyson Walker, fourth-year junior AJ Hoggard and junior Jaden Akins lead the backcourt. Freshman point guard Jeremy Fears was a McDonald’s All-American and headlines Izzo’s impressive recruiting class.

The front line will be strong, as usual, with 6-foot-8 power forward Malik Hall, 6-foot-9 center Mady Sissoko, 6-foot-11 backup center Carson Cooper, 6-foot-9 sophomore Jaxon Kohler and freshmen Coen Carr, a 6-foot-6 athletic freak, and 6-foot-11 Xavier Booker, another McDonald’s All-American.

It’s a good sign that Izzo did not downplay the Spartans’ potential when speaking at a recent media day.

“I’m going to go a little unconventional and tell you I love my team,” Izzo said. “I have seen our team in the top five and top 10. People have asked me if I like that and I always say no — I love it.”

Instead of playing at a typically slow pace, Izzo said he plans for this team to apply pressure defense and run more often because his roster is 10 to 12 deep with high-quality players. Izzo always tests his team with a tough nonconference schedule, and this one features Duke and Arizona in November and Baylor in December.

The Spartans are ranked No. 4 by Lindy’s, No. 5 by Blue Ribbon and No. 12 by KenPom. It’s a long journey from early November to early April, when the Final Four will be staged in Glendale, Arizona, and Michigan State will start No. 1 in my power rankings.

THE REST OF MY PRESEASON TOP 25...

2

KANSAS

The Big Ten lost one of its brightest stars when 7-foot-2 Hunter Dickinson transferred from Michigan and joined the Jayhawks as the top player in the portal. Dickinson is an excellent passer and perimeter shooter who makes everyone around him better. Point guard Dajuan Harris (77 career starts) and forwards KJ Adams and Kevin McCullar have plenty of experience, but young players must develop. Depth is a concern, and that's the primary reason this team is not rated No. 1. The guard rotation is promising with newcomers Elmarko Jackson, Johnny Furphy, Jamari McDowell and Towson transfer Nicolas Timberlake. Bill Self, who has coached Kansas to two national titles, is looking sharp with Dickinson plus three starters returning from a 28-win team.



3

PURDUE

Zach Edey should remain the nation's most dominant player. The 7-foot-4, 300-pound center is the reigning national Player of the Year, but his numbers (22.3 PPG, 12.9 RPG) might dip because the Boilermakers have a deeper and more talented rotation. Young guards Fletcher Loyer and Braden Smith fizzled late last season, but they will be better as sophomores. Purdue returns five starters from a team that swept the Big Ten regular-season and tournament titles, and coach Matt Painter adds 6-foot-7 Camden Heide, 7-foot-2 Will Berg, 6-foot-6 Myles Colvin and Southern Illinois transfer guard Lance Jones. This team is ranked No. 1 by KenPom. VSiN's Brent Musburger recently said, "I can't bet Purdue to win the national title." And I agree. But this rating is predictive for November and not about the Boilermakers' flops in March.



4

DUKE

In his first season as coach, Jon Scheyer guided the Blue Devils to 27 wins. He was a winner in the offseason, too. Kyle Filipowski, a 7-foot sophomore, turned down the NBA and will do bigger things after averaging 15.1 points and 8.9 rebounds. Filipowski is flanked by 6-foot-9 sophomore Mark Mitchell and 6-foot-10 center Ryan Young. An impressive recruiting class is highlighted by guards Caleb Foster and Jared McCain and forwards TJ Power and Sean Stewart. The backcourt has experienced leaders in senior guard Jeremy Roach and sophomore point guard Tyrese Proctor, so Scheyer has veterans to lean on while the prospects develop. Scheyer replaced Mike Krzyzewski and proved he could handle the job.



5

MARQUETTE

It all starts with senior Tyler Kolek, who's arguably the nation's top point guard. Kolek and junior shooting guard Kam Jones led the Golden Eagles to the Big East regular-season and tournament titles, beating Connecticut in the process. Marquette returns 88% of its scoring from a 29-win team, so the table is set for coach Shaka Smart.



6

CONNECTICUT

The Huskies won the NCAA championship and then lost a lot — center Adama Sanogo, guard Jordan Hawkins and forward Andre Jackson Jr. — but don't cry for coach Dan Hurley. UConn brings back 7-foot-2 center Donovan Clingan, senior guard Tristen Newton and forward Alex Karaban. Rutgers transfer Cam Spencer adds needed 3-point shooting in Hawkins' absence, and freshman point guard Stephon Castle is a five-star recruit and future star. Don't dwell on the departed stars because Hurley has another team with a high ceiling.



7

ARKANSAS

Eric Musselman's recruiting prowess is undeniable. Despite losing two NBA first-round picks, the Razorbacks will be better. Point guard Devo Davis returns to a backcourt that adds transfers Khalif Battle (Temple), Tramon Mark (Houston) and El Ellis (Louisville). Baye Fall, a 6-foot-10 center, arrives as a McDonald's All-American and will fit well with 6-foot-10 sophomore Trevon Brazile. Musselman, who has seven seniors on the roster, has coached Arkansas to three consecutive Sweet 16 appearances.



8

HOUSTON

Cougars coach Kelvin Sampson lost NBA first-round picks Jarace Walker and Marcus Sasser, but he's reloading much like Musselman at Arkansas. Senior point guard Jamal Shead will be joined by senior guards LJ Cryer, a transfer from Baylor, and Temple transfer Damian Dunn. Houston, which allowed 57.5 PPG to rank No. 2 in the nation in scoring defense, has enough talent and interior toughness to challenge Kansas atop the Big 12.



9

CREIGHTON

The Bluejays have an impressive big three — 7-foot-1 Ryan Kalkbrenner, junior guard Trey Alexander and senior guard Baylor Scheierman — coming back from a 24-win team that reached the Elite Eight. Expectations should remain high in Omaha. Greg McDermott is a great coach, and he added an elite 3-point shooter in Utah State transfer Steven Ashworth.



10

GONZAGA

For the first time in what seems like 10 years, Drew Timme will not be starring for the Zags and the preseason hype surrounding this team is not over the top. Bulldogs coach Mark Few is counting on a few transfers — point guard Ryan Nembhard (Creighton), shooting guard Steele Venters (Eastern Washington) and power forward Graham Ike (Wyoming) — to provide big boosts. Senior forward Anton Watson will be one of the few familiar faces. Few needs freshman Dusty Stroman to develop quickly. It's fair to question Gonzaga's defense, and the roster is short on size, which will be a problem when the Zags face Purdue in the Maui Invitational before Thanksgiving.



11. ARIZONA

Caleb Love (North Carolina), Jaden Bradley (Alabama) and Keshad Johnson (San Diego State) arrive in Tucson as high-profile transfers, and senior Oumar Ballo is one of four 7-footers on the Wildcats' roster. Tommy Lloyd is an outstanding offensive coach and recruiter, but one fair criticism has been his previous teams' lack of defensive toughness. Arizona's talent and size make it the Pac-12 favorite.

12. BAYLOR

Bears coach Scott Drew lost three of his top scorers but brought in freshman guard Ja'Kobe Walter, a McDonald's All-American, and senior guard RayJ Dennis, a former Toledo star who was the Mid-American Conference's top player. Senior forward Jalen Bridges, who averaged 10.3 points and started all 34 games, is the only returning starter, but Drew still will have Baylor near the top of the Big 12.

13. TENNESSEE

The Volunteers displayed their toughness by muscling Duke out of the NCAA Tournament, and they did it without point guard Zakai Zeigler, who went down with a season-ending knee injury in late February. Zeigler's return date this season is a mystery, but senior guard Santiago Vescovi returns along with senior forward Josiah-Jordan James. Tennessee was the No. 1-rated defensive team by KenPom, yet its offense was painful to watch, and the 3-point shooting must improve.

14. KENTUCKY

After getting overrated last year (No. 2 preseason), the Wildcats might be underrated here. It's difficult to evaluate what Kentucky will be early in the season as coach John Calipari replaces double-double machine Oscar Tshiebwe and works in one of the nation's top recruiting classes headlined by guards DJ Wagner and Justin Edwards. Senior guard Antonio Reeves can be a big-time scorer. Seven-foot freshman Aaron Bradshaw and senior forward Tre Mitchell add interior toughness.

15. FLORIDA ATLANTIC

After narrowly escaping the first round of the NCAA Tournament, the Owls were one defensive stop away from playing in the title game. Five starters return from coach Dusty May's 35-4 team. Junior guards Johnell Davis and Alijah Martin have NBA potential, and 7-foot-1 Vladislav Goldin gives FAU the ability to match up against bigger teams.

16. NORTH CAROLINA

It's not as if the Tar Heels were terrible last season (20-13, 11-9 ACC), but it was terribly disappointing for the preseason No. 1 team to finish seventh in its conference and miss the NCAA Tournament. It has been a rollercoaster ride for third-year coach Hubert Davis. Carolina should rebound with 6-foot-11 senior Armando Bacot (15.9 PPG, 10.4 RPG) and junior guard RJ Davis leading the way. The Heels added transfers Harrison Ingram (Stanford), Cormac Ryan (Notre Dame) and Paxson Wojcik (Brown).

17. TEXAS

Max Abmas, who transferred from Oral Roberts, is a dynamic playmaker and shooting star with 123 career starts. Rodney Terry was able to drop "interim" from his job title after coaching the Longhorns to the NCAA Elite Eight. Terry welcomes back junior guard Tyrese Hunter, senior forward Dylan Disu and sophomore forward Dillon Mitchell. Abmas is an exciting player who significantly raises the ceiling for this team.

18. MIAMI

The Hurricanes had seven NCAA Tournament wins in the past two seasons. While it's tough to say Jim Larranaga is an underrated coach, he deserves more credit. Point guard Nijel Pack and forward Norchad Omier played major roles during the Final Four run. Wooga Poplar will step up to help replace leading scorer Isaiah Wong, and forward Matthew Cleveland is a big addition as a transfer from Florida State.

19. TEXAS A&M

Veteran guards Wade Taylor IV and Tyrece Radford return to steer the Aggies, who finished 25-10 and won 15 games in the SEC. Texas A&M coach Buzz Williams has put together a strong roster with few weaknesses.

20. VILLANOVA

Kyle Neptune's break-even first season (17-17) as coach did not make anyone forget Jay Wright. The Wildcats will be much better this time around with senior guard Justin Moore and senior forward Eric Dixon leading a new-look team. Washington State transfer guard TJ Bamba is one of many promising additions.

21. COLORADO

Tad Boyle is coaching a sleeper team in the Pac-12. The Buffaloes bring back 84.0% of their scoring and two of the league's top five returning scorers in senior forward Tristan da Silva and junior guard KJ Simpson, who each averaged 15.9 points. Cody Williams, a 6-foot-8 forward, arrives as a five-star recruit, and 6-foot-10 Assane Diop is another big part of Colorado's hyped recruiting class. The Buffaloes are ready for prime time.

22. ST. JOHN'S

Rick Pitino remains one of the top coaches in the game, and he will have the Red Storm rising fast. Pitino has rebuilt the roster around 6-foot-11 senior Joel Soriano, who recorded 25 double-doubles last season. There are several immediate impact transfers on a talented team that will be underrated by most pundits. Pitino will win more than 20 games and get to the NCAA Tournament.

23. USC

Isaiah Collier is considered by some to be the nation's No. 1 freshman, and senior guard Boogie Ellis is the Pac-12's preseason Player of the Year after averaging 17.7 points. The Trojans will defend the rim with muscle and size as 7-foot-1 Vincent Iwuchukwu returns from a health scare and 6-foot-6 senior DJ Rodman, son of Dennis, transfers from Washington State.

24. MARYLAND

The gap between the Big Ten's top two teams (Michigan State, Purdue) and the next tier of contenders is not huge. Senior guard Jahmir Young and senior forward Donta Scott will make the Terrapins tough to beat.

25. UCLA

Always give coach Mick Cronin the benefit of the doubt. The Bruins lost Jaime Jaquez Jr., Tyger Campbell and others, but Cronin reloaded and stacked his roster with big men. UCLA could be a matchup nightmare in the post with 6-foot-10 sophomore Adem Bona, 7-foot-3 Aday Mara from Spain, 6-foot-10 Kenneth Nwuba, 6-foot-10 Devin Williams and 6-foot-9 Berke Buyuktuncel.

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATINGS

TEAM	RATING	TEAM	RATING	TEAM	RATING
KANSAS	92.0	VIRGINIA	83.5	DUQUESNE	78.5
PURDUE	91.5	FLORIDA	83.0	GEORGIA	78.5
HOUSTON	91.0	IOWA	83.0	UNLV	78.5
CONNECTICUT	90.5	IOWA STATE	83.0	VCU	78.5
GONZAGA	90.5	MIAMI	83.0	VANDERBILT	78.5
TENNESSEE	89.5	STANFORD	83.0	LIBERTY	78.0
DUKE	89.0	TEXAS TECH	83.0	LOYOLA (IL)	78.0
MICHIGAN STATE	88.5	BYU	82.5	WASHINGTON STATE	78.0
ALABAMA	88.0	MISSOURI	82.5	FLORIDA STATE	77.5
ARIZONA	88.0	XAVIER	82.5	SETON HALL	77.5
BAYLOR	88.0	CINCINNATI	82.0	YALE	77.5
CREIGHTON	88.0	ST. JOHNS	82.0	TULANE	77.0
MARQUETTE	88.0	LSU	81.5	UCF	77.0
TEXAS	88.0	MICHIGAN	81.5	GEORGIA TECH	76.5
ARKANSAS	87.5	NEW MEXICO	81.5	GRAND CANYON	76.5
NORTH CAROLINA	87.5	OKLAHOMA	81.5	PENN STATE	76.5
TEXAS A&M	87.0	UTAH	81.5	SAN DIEGO STATE	76.5
ILLINOIS	86.5	NC STATE	81.0	UAB	76.5
KENTUCKY	86.5	NEBRASKA	81.0	AKRON	75.5
USC	86.5	PROVIDENCE	81.0	BOSTON COLLEGE	75.5
AUBURN	86.0	RUTGERS	81.0	BRADLEY	75.5
TCU	86.0	ST MARYS (CA)	81.0	BUTLER	75.5
WISCONSIN	86.0	VIRGINIA TECH	81.0	CALIFORNIA	75.5
MARYLAND	85.5	BOISE STATE	80.5	KENT STATE	75.5
UCLA	85.0	DAYTON	80.5	LOYOLA-MARYMOUNT	75.5
VILLANOVA	85.0	OKLAHOMA STATE	80.5	NORTHERN IOWA	75.5
COLORADO	84.5	OLE MISS	80.5	SYRACUSE	75.5
FLORIDA ATLANTIC	84.5	PITTSBURGH	80.5	WICHITA STATE	75.5
MEMPHIS	84.5	WEST VIRGINIA	80.0	COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON	75.0
MISSISSIPPI STATE	84.5	WAKE FOREST	80.0	FURMAN	75.0
KANSAS STATE	84.0	ARIZONA STATE	79.5	NORTH TEXAS	75.0
CLEMSON	83.5	WASHINGTON	79.5	SAINT LOUIS	75.0
INDIANA	83.5	DRAKE	79.0	UC-IRVINE	75.0
NORTHWESTERN	83.5	NEVADA	79.0	UTAH STATE	75.0
OHIO STATE	83.5	SAN FRANCISCO	79.0	VERMONT	75.0
OREGON	83.5	COLORADO STATE	78.5	COLGATE	74.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATINGS

TEAM	RATING	TEAM	RATING	TEAM	RATING
EASTERN KENTUCKY	74.5	SOUTH ALABAMA	72.5	SIENA	70.0
INDIANA STATE	74.5	SANTA CLARA	72.5	WESTERN KENTUCKY	70.0
LONG BEACH STATE	74.5	TEMPLE	72.5	FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL	69.5
OHIO	74.5	TOLEDO	72.5	ILLINOIS STATE	69.5
SF AUSTIN STATE	74.5	UC-SANTA BARBARA	72.5	LIPSCOMB	69.5
DEPAUL	74.0	CHARLOTTE	72.0	MOREHEAD STATE	69.5
GEORGE MASON	74.0	CORNELL	72.0	PENNSYLVANIA	69.5
HOFSTRA	74.0	NOTRE DAME	72.0	PEPPERDINE	69.5
JAMES MADISON	74.0	SMU	72.0	SOUTH DAKOTA STATE	69.5
SOUTH CAROLINA	74.0	UNC-ASHEVILLE	72.0	SAM HOUSTON STATE	69.5
UNC-GREENSBORO	74.0	WEBER STATE	72.0	TEXAS STATE	69.5
WRIGHT STATE	74.0	IONA	71.5	WESTERN CAROLINA	69.5
DREXEL	73.5	PORTLAND	71.5	CAL BAPTIST	69.0
EAST CAROLINA	73.5	RICE	71.5	GARDNER WEBB	69.0
GEORGETOWN	73.5	WINTHROP	71.5	GEORGIA STATE	69.0
LOUISVILLE	73.5	ABILENE CHRISTIAN	71.0	MASSACHUSETTS	69.0
MIDDLE TENN STATE	73.5	ARKANSAS STATE	71.0	NEW MEXICO STATE	69.0
MINNESOTA	73.5	CAL DAVIS	71.0	RHODE ISLAND	69.0
MISSOURI STATE	73.5	CS-FULLERTON	71.0	UT-CHATTANOOGA	69.0
PRINCETON	73.5	DAVIDSON	71.0	UTAH VALLEY STATE	69.0
USF	73.5	OREGON STATE	71.0	WI-MILWAUKEE	69.0
SAN JOSE STATE	73.5	ST. PETERS	71.0	YOUNGSTOWN STATE	69.0
ST BONAVENTURE	73.5	UMASS-LOWELL	71.0	BRYANT	68.5
APPALACHIAN STATE	73.0	UTEP	71.0	KENNESAW STATE	68.5
FRESNO STATE	73.0	CLEVELAND STATE	70.5	LASALLE	68.5
LOUISIANA TECH	73.0	N KENTUCKY	70.5	STETSON	68.5
SAMFORD	73.0	ORAL ROBERTS	70.5	BELLARMINE	68.0
SEATTLE	73.0	RADFORD	70.5	DELAWARE	68.0
UNC-WILMINGTON	73.0	TOWSON STATE	70.5	NORTH ALABAMA	68.0
BELMONT	72.5	AIR FORCE	70.0	NORTH DAKOTA STATE	68.0
FLA GULF COAST	72.5	BROWN	70.0	PORTLAND STATE	68.0
FORDHAM	72.5	E WASHINGTON	70.0	SOUTHERN MISS	68.0
HAWAII	72.5	LA-LAFAYETTE	70.0	ST. JOSEPHS	68.0
MARSHALL	72.5	MONTANA	70.0	TEXAS SOUTHERN	68.0
MURRAY STATE	72.5	OLD DOMINION	70.0	TX-ARLINGTON	68.0
RICHMOND	72.5	PACIFIC	70.0	UC-RIVERSIDE	68.0

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATINGS

TEAM	RATING	TEAM	RATING	TEAM	RATING
GEORGE WASHINGTON	67.5	OAKLAND	65.5	LA-MONROE	63.0
LONGWOOD	67.5	SOUTH CAROLINA STATE	65.5	MD-BALT COUNTY	63.0
N ILLINOIS	67.5	SE MISSOURI STATE	65.5	NAVY	63.0
QUEENS COLL	67.5	SIU EDWARDSVL	65.5	NEW HAMPSHIRE	63.0
RIDER	67.5	TULSA	65.5	ROBERT MORRIS	63.0
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS	67.5	BALL STATE	65.0	SE LOUISIANA	63.0
SAN DIEGO	67.5	CS-BAKERSFIELD	65.0	ST FRANCIS-PA	63.0
SOUTHERN UTAH	67.5	FAIRFIELD	65.0	TEXAS A&M-COMM	63.0
AUSTIN PEAY	67.0	GRAMBLING	65.0	TX-RIO GRANDE	63.0
BUFFALO	67.0	JACKSONVILLE	65.0	CAMPBELL	62.5
CAL SAN DIEGO	67.0	MARIST	65.0	DENVER	62.5
GEORGIA SOUTHERN	67.0	NIAGARA	65.0	IDAHO STATE	62.5
IL-CHICAGO	67.0	NORFOLK STATE	65.0	MISSOURI-KC	62.5
JACKSON STATE	67.0	SACRAMENTO STATE	65.0	SOUTHERN U	62.5
MOUNT STATE MARYS	67.0	USC UPSTATE	65.0	TENNESSEE TECH	62.5
TROY	67.0	WOFFORD	65.0	ALBANY	62.0
AMERICAN	66.5	ALCORN STATE	64.5	ARMY	62.0
BOWLING GREEN	66.5	CANISIUS	64.5	CENTRAL CONNECTICUT	62.0
EAST TENN STATE	66.5	COASTAL CAROLINA	64.5	DETROIT	62.0
JACKSONVILLE STATE	66.5	MONTANA STATE	64.5	HAMPTON	62.0
MAINE	66.5	SACRED HEART	64.5	HOLY CROSS	62.0
MCNEESE STATE	66.5	STONY BROOK	64.5	MERRIMACK	62.0
MERCER	66.5	TENN-MARTIN	64.5	PRESBYTERIAN	62.0
NORTHEASTERN	66.5	TX-SAN ANTONIO	64.5	THE CITADEL	62.0
QUINNIPIAC	66.5	UTAH TECH	64.5	WM & MARY	62.0
TARLETON STATE	66.5	WAGNER	64.5	EASTERN MICHIGAN	61.5
WYOMING	66.5	ARK-LITTLE ROCK	64.0	ELON	61.5
DARTMOUTH	66.0	BINGHAMTON	64.0	MONMOUTH	61.5
HARVARD	66.0	LOYOLA-MD	64.0	NORTH FLORIDA	61.5
HOWARD	66.0	COLUMBIA	63.5	NICHOLLS STATE	61.5
MIAMI OHIO	66.0	HIGH POINT	63.5	TEXAS A&M CC	61.5
NORTHERN ARIZONA	66.0	LAFAYETTE	63.5	WESTERN MICHIGAN	61.5
NORTH DAKOTA	66.0	NORTHERN COLORADO	63.5	CS-NORTHRIDGE	61.0
ST THOMAS-MN	66.0	NEBRASKA-OMAHA	63.5	IUPUI	61.0
TENNESSEE STATE	66.0	NEW ORLEANS	63.5	NC CENTRAL	61.0
LEHIGH	65.5	FARLEIGH DICKINSON	63.0	SOUTHERN INDIANA	61.0

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATINGS

TEAM	RATING	TEAM	RATING	TEAM	RATING
CENTRAL MICHIGAN	60.5	NEW JERSEY TECH	59.0	NORTHWESTERN STATE	57.0
EVANSVILLE	60.5	PRAIRIE VIEW A&M	59.0	ALABAMA STATE	56.0
MANHATTAN	60.5	ALABAMA A&M	58.5	LINDENWOOD	56.0
PURDUE FT WAYNE	60.5	CAL POLY-SLO	58.5	MD-EAST SHORE	55.5
VALPARAISO	60.5	DELAWARE STATE	58.5	VMI	55.0
BOSTON U	60.0	STONEHILL	58.5	LONG ISLAND	54.5
CHARLESTON SO	60.0	EASTERN ILLINOIS	58.0	HOUSTON CHRISTIAN	54.0
WESTERN ILLINOIS	60.0	MORGAN STATE	58.0	NORTH CAROLINA A&T	54.0
BUCKNELL	59.5	SOUTH DAKOTA	58.0	COPPIN STATE	53.5
CENTRAL ARKANSAS	59.5	WI-GREEN BAY	58.0	LEMOYNE	53.5
CHICAGO STATE	59.5	FLORIDA A&M	57.5	IDAHO	53.0
ARK-PINE BLUFF	59.0	INCARNATE WORD	57.5	MISS VALLEY STATE	51.5
LAMAR	59.0	BETHUNE-COOKMAN	57.0		





WASHINGTON

2022 RECORD: 16-16 SU, 17-15 ATS, 19-12 O/U

Keion Brooks Jr. did not live up to his recruiting hype at Kentucky yet blossomed in his first season with Washington by averaging 17.7 points and 6.7 rebounds. The senior forward will again be among the top scorers in the Pac-12. Senior point guard Sahvir Wheeler, another Kentucky transfer, joins Brooks in Seattle this season. Transfer additions are a theme for coach Mike Hopkins, who finished 16-16 in his sixth season and was lucky to be brought back for a seventh. Hopkins is in win-now mode. Rutgers transfer point guard Paul Mulcahy is joined by newcomers Anthony Holland (Fresno State), Moses Wood (Portland) and Nate Calmese (Lamar). Hopkins reached out for help in the offseason and lured 83-year-old coaching legend Larry Brown as a staff analyst. The Huskies have a higher ceiling this season, mostly due to Mulcahy and Wheeler in the backcourt.

“HOOP’S” BETTING NUGGET

The Over was 18-9-1 in games with a closing total of 143 or less. Also, they are 28-15 ATS in conference play the past two seasons.

MAKINEN’S PR (NAT/CONF RANK)

79.5 (#67/#8)

RETURNING STARTERS

2

RETURNING MINUTES

46%



WASHINGTON STATE

2022 RECORD: 17-17 SU, 16-17 ATS, 14-20 O/U

Instead of dwelling on what the Cougars lost, which was a lot, coach Kyle Smith went to work on a rebuilding job the offseason. Washington State lost leading scorers Mouhamed Gueye to the NBA and TJ Bamba to Villanova as a transfer. DJ Rodman also left for USC. Joseph Yesufu (Kansas), Isaac Jones (Idaho) and Jaylen Wells (Sonoma State) were Smith’s top transfer additions. He also recruited prep stars Rueben Chinyelu, Spencer Mahoney and Isaiah Watts. Senior forward Andrej Jakimovski is the team’s top returning scorer (7.7 PPG). The Cougars tied for fifth in the Pac-12 and went 17-17 in Smith’s fourth year. Smith is a good coach in a tough spot. Washington State will be fortunate to finish .500 even if Chinyelu, a 6-foot-11 freshman from Nigeria who prepped at the NBA Academy, develops into a pro prospect.

“HOOP’S” BETTING NUGGET

Washington State is 4-14 ATS as a favorite of between two and 11 points since Feb. 4, 2022, but they did go 10-4 ATS at home last season.

MAKINEN’S PR (NAT/CONF RANK)

78.0 (#78/#10)

RETURNING STARTERS

1

RETURNING MINUTES

28%



OREGON

2022 RECORD: 21-15 SU, 17-19 ATS, 18-18 O/U

Injuries and inexperience tripped up the Ducks last season, when coach Dana Altman won 21 games yet missed the NCAA Tournament for the second straight time. Oregon has two big men to build around in 6-foot-11 senior N’Faly Dante and 7-foot junior Nate Bittle. Dante is a potential star in a conference loaded with talented centers and power forwards. Senior guards Jermaine Couisnard and Keeshawn Barthelemy add leadership and maturity. Altman always reloads and has done it again by adding touted freshmen Kwame Evans, Mookie Cook and Jackson Shelstad. The top transfers are Kario Oquendo (Georgia) and Jesse Zarzuela (Central Michigan), plus junior-college sharpshooter Jadrian Tracey. If the injury bug stays away, the Ducks can run with Arizona, Colorado, UCLA and USC. The NIT is not something that interests Altman, who will likely bounce back and lead this team to the NCAA Tournament.

“HOOP’S” BETTING NUGGET

The Over is 15-5-1 in Oregon’s neutral-court games since the 2019-20 season began, the fourth-highest Over percentage among teams with more than 10 neutral court games played in that span.

MAKINEN’S PR (NAT/CONF RANK)

83.5 (#32/#5)

RETURNING STARTERS

3

RETURNING MINUTES

44%



OREGON STATE

2022 RECORD: 11-21 SU, 14-15 ATS, 11-20 O/U

In March 2021, Wayne Tinkle coached Cinderella. The Beavers made an improbable run to the Pac-12 tournament title and reached the NCAA Elite Eight. It was downhill from there as Oregon State finished 3-28 the following season and 11-21 last season. The Pope will be called on to create optimism — Jordan Pope, a guard who led the team in scoring (12.6 PPG) as a freshman. Pope, senior Dexter Akanno and sophomore Justin Rochelin will form a more experienced backcourt. The Beavers are counting on 6-foot-9 sophomore Tyler Bilodeau and 6-foot-10 newcomer Thomas Ndong to produce in the paint. Tinkle is a coach you root for to succeed, but his 10th season in Corvallis could be his last. Oregon State has no prayer of contending in the Pac-12 and would be better off in the Mountain West.

“HOOP’S” BETTING NUGGET

Among teams that have been a home favorite at least three times the past two seasons, the Beavers 2-11 ATS record gives them the second-worst cover rate as a home favorite the past two seasons.

MAKINEN’S PR (NAT/CONF RANK)

71.0 (#160/#12)

RETURNING STARTERS

3

RETURNING MINUTES

65%

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