

# Sports

## Southeastern Conference clearly best in tournament

By GRANT LONG

Why doesn't the *Decree* write anything on the NCAA tournament? This question has recently been brought to my attention.

First of all, I would like to say that the *Decree* is a bi-weekly paper and we could not give the tournament the proper coverage it deserves while it was still be played. But this, however, does not stop us from doing a tournament wrap-up and looking at the year in review in college basketball.

It was an interesting year in college basketball, from Midnight Madness until Kentucky became national champs. Kentucky was picked preseason number one and to no one's surprise won the tournament as expected.

It was clear that Kentucky was the cream of the crop from the start to the finish, but what can be said about the rest of the nation? Well, let's look at the team Kentucky played in the final — Syracuse. This was a team with one star player who was average at best, but played with heart.

Just think, Syracuse's star player, John Wallace, left school early last year to play in the NBA. Wallace, then realizing he was not ready for the NBA, made a strange move and actually went back to college and played out his senior year. That is a rare feat in this day in time. The extra year in school helped him refine his game and also helped him to carry his team to the finals where they almost had a shot at beating Kentucky. I also have to tip my hand to Syracuse coach Jim Boehiem for doing a great job with the team he had.

Next, let's look at the conferences and how they did in tournament play. The Southeastern Conference was by far the best in both the men's and women's tournament, as well as in regular season play. In the men's tournament, all of its teams reached the Sweet 16 and two reached the Final Four with Kentucky winning it all. In women's play, two SEC teams made the final four

### Opinion

and eventually winded up playing in the final game, but this was the year of the Lady Volunteers of Tennessee.

The next best conference after that would be the Big East. The Big East re-emerged as the premier conference in the land, a title which used to be owned by the ACC. The Big East has had three teams ranked in the top 15 all year long, and at one point had five teams in the top 20. Just think, for one conference to have 25 percent of the 20 best teams in the land is a compliment to the level of play in that league.

This is also the same Big East that the RPI had ranked as the sixth best conference in the land. That just goes to show what their quasi-experts know about basketball. It is also kind of ironic that Syracuse, the fourth best team in the Big East, made the final when most of the country expected the Big East heavyweights, Villanova, Georgetown, and UConn, to be one of the teams who had a shot of making the final. The UConn women also got to the Final Four, but lost a nail-biter to Tennessee in overtime. If the SEC was the best conference in the land, the Big East was a very close second.

With every success story, there are also one or two failures. This year's dunce of college basketball was the Atlantic Coast Conference. The conference got the most bids to the tournament, with six. No disrespect to ACC accomplishments in previous years, but the ACC had two teams too many going to the tournament.

Clemson and Maryland had rebuilding years at best and they were both allowed to go to the tournament. How is this fair? There are probably two other teams that worked their butts off, practiced very hard, probably had their greatest season, and played in a weaker conference but still deserved to be in the tournament

before Clemson and Maryland. As far as I am concerned, they only took up space in the field.

As for the rest of the ACC, only three got out of the first round and two made it to the Sweet 16. Wake Forest then barely beat Louisville to make it to the Elite Eight and then lost to Kentucky in the regional final. It can be said at best the ACC's performance was disappointing.

But there was also some other memorable moments in this year's tournament. In his last NCAA tournament, the legendary Pete Carrill of Princeton took his team to Indianapolis to play the defending champion UCLA and what happened was one of the biggest upsets in tournament history as Princeton beat UCLA.

Who could forget the fabulous dunk by Darvin Ham of Texas Tech when he brought down the backboard against UNC? The great play of Syracuse and Mississippi State? And finally who can forget the fabulous game that Tony Delk played in the final with eight three-pointers?

This year's tournament is probably one of the best ever.

## Bishops' youth leads to mixed outcomes

The Battling Bishops showed their youth earlier this month as they dropped three games.

The Bishops lost on the road to Methodist College, 8-2 and 5-4, and at home to Scranton, 5-3.

The games against Methodist featured the Bishop's, number nine in the nation, against the Monarch's, the nation's number one team.

"This just wasn't our day," said Head Coach Mike Fox. "At times I thought we outplayed them, but poor base running hurt us. I was proud of Todd Middlekauf and Chat Eaton for their efforts."

Middlekauf went 2-4 with two RBI's and Eaton retired all 10 batters in relief.

The Battling Bishops got off to a bad start against Scranton and were unable to recover. Scranton scored four runs in the first inning and the Bishops left 15 men on base.

"We just didn't get the big hit when we needed it," Fox said.

After playing six games in seven days, the Battling Bishops had three days off in late March before taking on The Pride from Greensboro College in the month's final weekend.

Tie Bishops swept the Pride by 10-7 and 20-2 scores.

Senior Eddie Mintz picked up his fifth win of the season in game one, but the big story was Stan Mohn. Mohn tied two Wesleyan records as he made his 79th career appearance and recorded his 20th career save.

The Bishops struggled defen-

sively in the middle innings but clutch hitting from Jeremy Stewart (two-run single with two outs) and Matt Hollem (three-run double with two outs) provided the team with a six-run sixth inning.

The Bishops cruised through game two as they pounded 19 hits from 13 different players. Freshman Mike Abbruzzese pitched seven innings, only allowing three hits. He retired 13 straight batters from the third to seventh innings and was named Dixie Conference Freshman of the Week for the second straight week.

At the start of April, the Bishops were 18-7 overall and third in the conference at 6-2.

### Lady Bishops win two from Methodist

The Battling Bishops swept Methodist College 6-5 and 13-4 to remain undefeated in the Dixie Conference with a 4-0 mark at the end of March.

The Bishops also played in six other games at the end of the month against tough regionally and nationally ranked competition. The Bishops split with Bethany, 4-7 and 3-1, and dropped both games to Salisbury State, 7-11 and 4-5, and Chowan, 2-4 and 2-12

Junior Sara Svejda had the hot bat against Methodist as she went 3-4 with two RBI's and a triple in game one and 3-3 with an RBI and two doubles in game two.

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