

NBA playoff picture: Bulls and Hawks and Lakers, oh my!

By Ryan Gordy
STAFF WRITER

The Los Angeles Lakers are there. The Boston Celtics are there. The Miami Heat are there, too. The National Basketball Association playoffs are here.

This season, both conferences have power-house teams and underdogs looking for upsets. There will be no upsets in the Eastern Conference in the first round. The Bulls will crush the eighth-seeded Pacers and Miami's Big Three will put the hurt on the Sixers. The Knicks do not play any defense, so the Celtics will win in that series. Dwight Howard and the Magic will beat the Hawks.

The Western Conference is full of upsets in the later rounds. In the first round, the only upset will be the Trailblazers over the Mavericks. The lower-seeded Hornets, Nuggets, and Grizzlies will all lose in the first round.

In the second round of the Western Conference, the top-seeded Spurs will beat the Trailblazers because of all the veteran experience of Tim Duncan and Tony Parker. Plus, the additional offensive help from three-point shooter Matt Bonner gives the Spurs the edge.

The Thunder will upset the Lakers' bid for a third championship in a row. Kevin Durant led the NBA in scoring, averaging 28 points per game, and the defensive addition of Kendrick Perkins is too much for the Lakers to handle.

The Eastern Conference is just as hard to pick. Miami versus Boston will be a classic match-up. In a clash of stars, I like Boston to win. Boston will win because of their experience playing together and their defensive prowess. Boston was a top five defensive team this season and will be able to disrupt LeBron James, Dwyane Wade, and Chris Bosh.

The Bulls versus Magic series is just as good. The Bulls have too much depth for the Magic to cope with. They'll get Dwight Howard in foul trouble with Boozer and Noah. Then, they'll break down the Magic's defense with Most Valuable Player candidate Derrick Rose and role-playing sharp shooter Kyle Korver.

The Western Conference finals will be won by the fourth-seeded Thunder over the one-seeded Spurs. This is because the Spurs will be tired by the time they get to this series.

The Thunder are a young team with their star, Durant, and co-pilot, Russell Westbrook, who, together, dominate

games. As a defensive presence, Perkins will stop Duncan and Dujaun Blair from scoring points in the paint. The series will go seven games, but the younger Thunder will come out on top.

The Eastern Conference will be a classic, Bulls versus Celtics. I personally think this is the Bull's year. Rose, Luol Deng, Carlos Boozer, and Korver will out-hustle the Celtics to reach the championship series. Rose will take over the series as their offense soars.

The key for the Bulls is stopping Rajon Rondo. Rose is an underrated defender and won't let Rondo work his magic. This series will also go seven games, but the Bulls will pull through late in game seven.

The championship series will feature the Bulls and the Thunder. This will be a great up-tempo match-up because of the two team's offensive style of play. The Bulls will be NBA champions after seven games, because of their ability to perform in the clutch and their rebounding ability with Boozer and Noah. Korver and Deng will carry the team with their consistent play, and Rose will dominate the game with his fast-break skills.

The 2011 NBA champs are the Chicago Bulls.



(Left) Sophomore **Will James** hurls a pitch towards the plate in the top of the 5th inning. (Right) **Kyle Wooden**, senior, waits to crush a pitch to drive a runner in from first base.



PHOTOS BY KACEY MINNICK/GUILDFORDIAN

What's Going On in Guilford Sports... LAST WEEK'S GAMES AND MATCHES

BASEBALL

APRIL 20 GUILFORD 5 LYNCHBURG 6*!

MEN'S LACROSSE

APRIL 20 GUILFORD 8 ROANOKE 29*

MEN'S TENNIS

APRIL 19 GUILFORD 1 HAMPDEN SYDNEY 5*!

WOMEN'S TENNIS

APRIL 17 GUILFORD 1 BRIDGEWATER 5*

GOLF

APRIL 17-18 GUILFORD 1ST OF 8 AT ODAC CHAMPIONSHIP

WOMEN'S LACROSSE

APRIL 20 GUILFORD 6 WASHINGTON AND LEE 19

SOFTBALL

APRIL 17 GUILFORD 2 VA. WESLEYAN 8*

GUILFORD 7 LYNCHBURG 5*

UPCOMING GAMES AND MATCHES

WOMEN'S LACROSSE

APRIL 23 GUILFORD V RANDOLPH*

SOFTBALL

APRIL 21 GUILFORD V RANDOLPH-MACON*!

MEN'S & WOMEN'S TRACK & FIELD/WOMEN'S TENNIS

APRIL 22-23 ODAC CHAMPIONSHIPS

GOLF

MAY 10-13 NCAA DIVISION III CHAMPIONSHIPS

KEY- * = ODAC GAME ! = ODAC TOURNAMENT GAME HOME TEAM IN CAPS