

'Unstoppable' Coleman, SU will paint country Orange

By **JAMES SUROWIECKI**
Sports Editor

Another year, another Top Twenty. What more could a sports-writer ask for except a chance to spout off about college basketball? This piece will try to do a few things, including pick the team that will win the national championship, throw in a couple of casual references to Hemingway, and aggravate a few people along the way. Remember, the top four teams in this poll will compose the quartet of teams in Kemper Arena for this year's Final Four.

1. Syracuse: The Orangemen deserved to win the national championship last season, and will bring the title home this year, ending all doubts. Center Rony Seikaly has finally matured and become one of the nation's finest centers, while Sherman Douglas was the country's second-best point guard, flashy and yet ever-so solid. Sophomore power forward Derrick Coleman, a magnificently cocky player who was an unstoppable rebounder during the tournament, is the key to this team. The Orange do lack a 3-point shooter, though.

2. Pittsburgh: In terms of sheer talent, the Panthers are the best team in America, but one never knows where they are mentally. Jerome Lane, at 6-foot-6 the nation's best rebounder, and 6-11 Charles Smith will combine with Bobby Martin to form a dynamite frontcourt. The loss of Mike Goodson will hurt, but Pitt is very deep.

3. Kentucky: Winston Bennett is back, Rex Chapman is as gutsy a

shooter as ever, and Eddie Sutton lured a remarkable recruiting class to Lexington. Ed Davender teams with Chapman to give the Wildcats a superior backcourt. Potential is the story here, as it is at . . .

4. Michigan: Prop 48 victims Terry Mills and Rumeal Robinson will make a big splash, but Gary Grant, the best guard in the country, will hold the Wolverines together. Glen Rice, at 6-foot-7 a simply explosive player, may dominate the Big Ten.

5. Indiana: Yes, Steve Alford is gone. But Lyndon Jones has arrived, and Keith Smart is ready to take over the scoring duties. Center Dean Garrett is essential to Indiana's success in a defensive sense, and Ricky Calloway must produce for the Hoosiers to win.

6. Kansas: The Jayhawks may not have far to go at the end of the season, now that coach Larry Brown and all-everything Danny Manning have decided to stay in Lawrence. Manning, Manning and more Manning.

7. Purdue: The Big Ten is going to be fearsome this year. The Boilermakers may challenge for the title, and between Todd Mitchell and Troy Lewis they have the talent to do so. But after last year's collapse, Purdue's heart has to be questioned.

8. Louisville: Watching the Cardinals when they won it all was like feeling the beads of water on the outside of the bottle before drinking a cold beer. Watching them last year was like drinking the beer and finding out it was flat.

9. Missouri: Derrick Chievous is the premier swingman in the country. As long he doesn't overdose on the

sugar in his iced tea, Missouri should ride his talent into the Top Ten.

10. Florida: One half of the M&M gang is gone, but 6-foot-4 Vernon Maxwell is back as the SEC's best senior. Dwayne Schintzius has to back up his words with some stats if the Gators are to roll.

11. North Carolina: Dean Smith insists his team is being underrated when it's placed in the Top 10, and he's right.

12. Temple: Tim Perry is injured, and Nate Blackwell has vanished, but Howard Evans remains, and when Perry returns he should provide an excellent complement to a fine freshman class. John Chaney has fashioned a fantastic program, and the Owls should provide UNC with a stiff mid-season test.

13. Georgetown: Reggie is gone, but the Miracles are still pretty good. Charles Smith has developed into a solid point guard, and Perry McDonald has overcome his 6-4 height to become a dominating inside player. Freshman Anthony Tucker must make an immediate impact.

14. Duke: The Blue Devils will miss Tommy Amaker, perhaps, but Quin Snyder has the talent to run the point. More importantly, Danny Ferry is everything they said he was when he was a senior in high school. Robert Brickey is more than a jumper, and John Smith is a fine inside player.

15. Arizona: Steve Kerr is back, but no one really knows what that means. Sean Elliott is still unheralded and still a superior multi-talented player. But Pac-10 basketball is less than mediocre.

16. Iowa: The overrated Gerry Wright, who never did become the knight errant Sir Jamalot, is gone. That will help the Hawkeyes. Roy Marble is a lovely swingman, and Jeff Moe is, after all, the toughest player in America. You have to be when you let yourself get hit in the face with basketballs. It'll be most interesting to see how Iowa recovers from its stunning collapse against UNLV in the tournament.

17. Georgia Tech: A group of rookies of the year does not a championship make, but the disappearance of Bruce Dalrymple will free up the inside and greatly reduce the supply of bricks in Atlanta. A Michael Christian-Brian Oliver backcourt will have explosive potential, while fat boy Dennis Scott doesn't look headed for a wipeout.

18. St. John's: Mark Jackson, the nation's best point guard last year, has left Alumni Hall, and the Redmen will take time to recover from his absence. But Louie Carnesecca recruited a complete backcourt out of San Jacinto Junior College in Boo Harvey and Marcus Porter. The key, though, is the Amityville Horror. Shelton Jones must wake up from his annual winter hibernation and live up all his potential.

19. Wyoming: Fennis Dembo is the model for everything Derrick Coleman has ever said. He defines self-confidence, because every boast is backed up with a 23-foot jumper that he nails. Eric Leckner is the best center west of the Mississippi.

20. Notre Dame: It's hard for the Irish to get excited about basketball,

because just like getting married is an admission that something matters more than trout fishing, so caring too much about basketball is an admission that something matters more than football. But David Rivers is a pretty good reason to care about basketball.

AP Top 20

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|-----------------------|-------|-------|
| 1. Syracuse (32) | 31-7 | 1,177 |
| 2. Purdue (6) | 25-5 | 975 |
| 3. North Carolina (3) | 32-4 | 974 |
| 4. Pittsburgh (5) | 25-8 | 946 |
| 5. Kentucky (6) | 18-11 | 918 |
| 6. Indiana (6) | 30-4 | 914 |
| 7. Kansas (3) | 25-11 | 852 |
| 8. Missouri (1) | 24-10 | 811 |
| 9. Michigan (2) | 20-12 | 797 |
| 10. Wyoming | 24-10 | 569 |
| 11. Iowa | 30-5 | 510 |
| 12. Temple | 32-4 | 509 |
| 13. Louisville | 18-14 | 499 |
| 14. Florida | 23-11 | 434 |
| 15. Duke | 24-9 | 430 |
| 16. Georgetown | 29-5 | 368 |
| 17. Arizona | 18-12 | 353 |
| 18. Georgia Tech | 16-13 | 296 |
| 19. Oklahoma | 24-10 | 227 |
| 20. DePaul | 28-3 | 147 |

Others receiving votes: Notre Dame 133, UNLV 99, Illinois 61, Auburn 53, UCLA 53, New Orleans 48, Memphis State 47, Bradley 41, Georgia 36, Louisiana State 19, Ohio State 19, N.C. State 17, St. John's 13, Southern Mississippi 13, New Mexico 11, Brigham Young 9, Austin Peay 8, Kansas State 7, Marshall 7, UTEP 7, Arkansas 6, Tennessee 6, Xavier, Ohio 6, Miami, Fla. 5, Clemson 4, Marist 3, Vanderbilt 2, Stanford 1.

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