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BC Polls: Duke falls, but stays on top

DICK JERARDI

KNIGHT RIDER NEWSPAPERS

1. **DUKE (12-1):** And then there were none. The Blue Devils, the last of the unbeaten, went down Sunday night at Florida State, 77-76.
2. **KANSAS (12-1):** Drew Gooden had 27 points, 14 rebounds (and eight turnovers) as the Jayhawks won at Colorado, 97-85. KU crushed the Buffs on the boards, 51-33, and now has beaten Colorado 25 consecutive times.
3. **FLORIDA (12-1):** There is a very good chance that nobody in Gainesville noticed that the Gators beat South Carolina, 69-60, for their 11th straight win. They were all too busy contemplating life without Steve Spurrier.
4. **OKLAHOMA STATE (13-1):** Cowboys barely shot 50 percent from the free-throw line and shot only 32.8 percent from the field in 70-61 home loss to Texas that included a bizarre fight between a spectator and Texas players.
5. **CINCINNATI (13-1):** Won, 72-62 at East Carolina in front of a wild crowd in Pirates' Conference USA debut. Bill Hernion's ECU team did many good things, but shot just 3-for-22 from the arc.
6. **OKLAHOMA (11-1):** Sooners crushed Texas A&M, 89-63, for 10th consecutive

win, their longest streak in 10 years. Oklahoma shot just 34.5 percent from the field.

7. **MARYLAND (11-2):** Terps get their chance to blast North Carolina Wednesday night. They are not likely to show much mercy.

8. **GONZAGA (12-2):** Bulldogs were really fun to watch New Year's Eve on Hawk Hill.

9. **KENTUCKY (9-3):** Lost at Mississippi State, 74-69, in OT after leading 21-2. It was the Wildcats' first loss in an SEC opener since 1986.

10. **PITTSBURGH (14-1):** Held off a dozen Boston College second-half charges to win, 77-74, ending the Eagles' 25-game home winning streak. Panthers are definitely for real.

11. **VIRGINIA (9-1):** Lost at home to North Carolina State, 81-74, as Wolfpack freshman star Julius Hodge had 21 points.

12. **BUTLER (13-1):** Beat all the tough non-conference teams and then lost Horizon League opener. Who can figure?

13. **MIAMI (Fla.) (14-1):** Lost at Connecticut, 76-75, proving a Hurricane team really can lose a game.

14. **ILLINOIS (12-3):** Went down on upset Saturday, losing at Wisconsin, 72-66.

15. **BOSTON COLLEGE (12-2):** Kept closing, but never could catch up against game Pittsburgh team.

COUNTDOWN, FROM PAGE 9

Earnhart Jr. and Michael Waltrip. Earnhart knew he could not win the race, so instead, he played defense for the cars that he owned. Waltrip went on to win the race, the first of his Winston Cup career, as Earnhart Jr. finished second. On that late February evening, just hours after the race had concluded, NASCAR President Mike Helton announced that Dale Earnhart had died. The death of the seven-time Winston Cup champion led to investigations into the safety of NASCAR drivers, eventually resulting in requiring drivers to wear some sort of head and neck safety restraints.

1. A Nation Mourns

Following the terrorist attacks on the United States Sept. 11, sports came to a standstill. A week's worth of NFL action was suspended, as were six days of Major League Baseball games. Many NCAA football teams cancelled their games for that week as well. When action resumed, sports seemed to hold a higher meaning in our wounded American hearts. Patriotism ruled the day, as pre-game ceremonies honored heroes lost in the attacks on New York and Washington, D.C. Instead of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame," during the seven-inning stretch, baseball fans sang "God Bless America." In a nation in which sports seems to mean everything at times, sports began to be even more significant. Although the final scores may have been a bit less emphasized, Americans proved their resilience and defied terrorists by returning to what was important in their lives. Sports will always be important to Americans; but, following Sept. 11, perhaps our obsession with our beloved sports teams has transformed into a love for everything sports stands for: freedom and liberty.



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