

Rothenberg

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er over Rick Pitino's Cardinal team, going to show that a hot hand and a little luck are all one needs to advance in the NCAA Tournament. Marquis Daniels leads Auburn into what should be an interesting Sweet Sixteen matchup with Syracuse.

Going even further, you can note how Michigan State and Maryland showed how mortal Florida and Xavier were in each team's respective second-round game. Michigan State probably isn't as good as it has been in recent years, but the team is getting it done anyway. The Terrapins survived UNC-Wilmington in the first round

and let everyone know the defending champs plan to hold their crown a little longer.

The major powers — including all four No. 1 seeds and two No. 2 seeds — are still alive heading into the regional rounds. Will Tubby Smith and the Kentucky Wildcats meet their fate against the Wisconsin Badgers? Can Oklahoma stop a surging Butler squad? Right now, it's hard to say. Given what we've seen by now, it certainly is possible for a top seed to go down this weekend.

But while some people mourn the train wreck that is their

NCAA bracket, it is enjoyable to finally have some early-round games worth watching. A lot of people enjoy cheering on the underdog, so they are getting a great chance now.

Choosing the pairings might have been just a case of dumb luck by the selection committee, though looking at it now, they might have done a pretty decent job overall. It could suggest a sense of increasing parity among tournament teams or just the right teams playing each other. In any event, it'll be interesting to see who are the four left standing in New Orleans.

Rothenberg is a fourth-year sports- and entertainment-management student.



Smith

The Gamecock's NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament Pool

Here are the standings in The Gamecock's NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament pool following the first two rounds. The top five readers will receive a prize from The Gamecock.

The Gamecock Staff

1. Brad Senkiw — 74 points
2. Adam Beam — 58 points
3. Katie Smith — 56 points
4. Chris Foy — 47 points
- T5. Matt Rothenberg — 46 points
- T5. Justin Bajan — 46 points
7. David Stagg — 42 points



Readers

1. Stephen Wayne — 59 points
2. Peter Farr — 53 points
3. Paitra Pinkney — 51 points
4. Josh Corbett — 48 points
5. Jake Corbett — 47 points
6. Aisha Haynes — 46 points
7. Larcey Simpson — 43 points
8. Brandon Simmons — 41 points
9. Ernest Stroman — 39 points

Brad Senkiw, the assistant sports editor, has the overall lead after two rounds, thanks to picking all three first-round upset specials — Butler, Tulsa and Central Michigan — which landed him 30 extra points. Reader Stephen Wayne is atop the leaderboard among those who sent their picks in. He managed to score two of the upsets, putting him at No. 1.

BRIEFLY

USC has best NCAA finish in four years

The USC women's swimming and diving team finished 24th at the NCAA Swimming and Diving Championships this past weekend. This finish is the highest for the Gamecocks in coach Don Gibb's four-year tenure.

Auburn won the championship for the second straight year, with 536 points, while Georgia finished second and Florida in fifth place.

USC junior Jennifer VanAssen placed 16th in the consolation round of the 100-meter freestyle. Her teammate, Carolynn McHugh, also competed in the 100 freestyle.

Three USC athletes earned All-American honors during the championships. VanAssen finished seventh in the 200 freestyle to earn first team All-American honors, while diver Lauren King placed seventh on the one-meter board to receive the same honor. Diver Tracey Richardson was named an honorable mention All-American with a 10th-place finish on the three-meter board.

Next week, the USC men's swimming and diving team will compete at the NCAA Championships in Austin, Texas. Representing the Gamecocks will be swimmer Tamas Szucs and diver Andy Bradley.

Women's tennis 2-1 during Utah swing

The 38th-ranked USC women's tennis team defeated Utah 6-1 on Sunday to improve to 11-5 on the year. Carolina took all three double matches from the Utes and won five matches in singles. Kathy Boyanovich suffered the only loss for the Gamecocks at the number one singles spot.

The win marked a rebound for the Gamecocks, though; Carolina lost to BYU on Saturday in Provo, Utah. It was the Gamecocks' third non-conference loss this season.

The pair of Boyanovich and Magda Wojdylo won USC's only doubles match, with an 8-4 win over the Cougars' team of Klemper and Richards.

Jodi Kenoyer and Danielle Wiggins lost their doubles match, only the second of the year for that team.

Carolina scored its only points with singles wins by Wiggins and Kenoyer, both in straight sets.

On Friday, USC beat Utah State 6-1 in Logan, Utah. Carolina swept the Aggies in doubles play, and won five singles matches. Winning in singles for USC were Boyanovich, Kenoyer, Justine Walsh, Wiggins and Catherine Brown.

Head coach Arlo Elkins also

announced the signings of Laura Ganzer, Christyn Lucas, Grace Blakely and Miranda Guittarez for the 2003-04 season.

The Gamecocks play Auburn on Friday and will play host to Alabama on Sunday. The match against the Crimson Tide will be the Gamecocks' last home regular-season match.

Equestrian puts six into Zone 5 Finals

USC's equestrian team had six riders qualify for the Region 2 Finals on Saturday at a meet held at Auburn University. The top three finishers in each class at the regional competition will advance to Zones.

Lindsey Wilson finished second in novice fences and third in novice flat to qualify. Courtney Borton came out on top in open horsemanship, while Michelle Jenkins took the walk/trot competition.

Molly Harrison and Lisa Boykin qualified for Zones with third-place finishes in intermediate flat and novice fences, respectively. By coming in third in advanced horsemanship, Kerrie Reeves also qualified.

The equestrian team will compete in the Zone 5 Finals on April 5 and 6 at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Ga.

Graduation

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enough scandals happening, to try to mobilize college presidents to say this is an embarrassment to us as a group. We have this window here, let's use it to do something real.

"The challenge is that there are going to be a lot of powerful coaches who will argue that this would deny opportunities, particularly to African-American students who wouldn't be able to come to their schools under a system like that."

Lapchick said that under

Brand's plan those players who did go to college would be more likely to graduate.

Lapchick also favored making freshmen ineligible to play, saying they often fall behind in the classroom and have trouble catching up.

"If freshmen were ineligible you also wouldn't have kids who are going there to play for a year or two and then turn pro because they wouldn't waste a year sitting around until they became eligible," he said. "You'd get people who are really committed to playing in college."

Low graduation rates reflect poorly not only on the colleges

and coaches, Lapchick said, but on the whole education system. Black students from urban schools, in general, are less prepared for college level work, he said.

"It's a whole chain here," he said. "There are a lot of people in our schools, too many, who think they're doing young people a favor by promoting them from grade to grade, believing the dream that this kid is so talented that he's going to make it into the pros. The odds remain staggeringly against a high school athlete getting a college scholarship, let alone a career in the pros."

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