

## **Today in College Basketball**

### **BY MATTHEW HATFIELD**

Well, the shocker of the night in college basketball on Wednesday was Rutgers ousting Notre Dame from the Big East Tournament. Where does Notre Dame stand right now as far as getting into the big dance? It does not look good for the Irish, that's for sure. What hurt them most of all was the injury to Chris Quinn, arguably Notre Dame's best shooter. Quinn did not return after suffering an injury in the first half and went scoreless. Torrin Francis had a double-double and PG Chris Thomas had a sound 17. But the bottom line is Collin Falls had a bad night shooting the basketball and the Irish were way below average on defense, surrendering 72 points to the 10-18 Scarlet Knights.

In other action.... West Virginia trounced Providence and did so convincingly. Kevin Pittsnogle led the way as the Mountaineers put on an offensive assault against a team that did not play at all in the second half. And anymore people think Ryan Gomes is better than Syracuse's Hakim Warrick? Ever since the Friars lost to Pacific in the opening round of last year's NCAA's it has been all down hill for Gomes and co.

TCU dispatched Marquette from C-USA play as 6-2 senior guard Corey Santee hit the big shot to propel the Horned Frogs into the next round for the second straight year. Had Travis Diener been on the court for Marquette they probably would've won, but he is out with an injury. TCU faces Louisville at 1PM on Saturday, a Cardinals team that I think will wipe the floor the with them [TCU].

Memphis also moved on to the next round of C-USA Tournament, beating St. Louis. John Calipari and his Tigers will see #25 Charlotte on Thursday night. This should be an outstanding game to watch and really could be a coin flip.

#### **What to Watch for on Thursday:**

**West Virginia - Boston College:** I'm liking the upset here of West Virginia. BC has not shown me a whole lot as of late, especially with their recent loss to Pittsburgh not too long after dropping their first game of the season to a struggling Notre Dame team. BC needs its backcourt to play their very best to win because you know Eagles forward Craig Smith and Jared Dudley will come to play. Dudley and Smith combine for just over 16 boards per game. WVA's top rebounder averages less than six a night. So rebounding could be the key in this one.

**Pittsburgh - Villanova:** A lot of star power here as Nova has one of the country's best starting lineups, while the Pitt trio of Krauser, Troutman and Taft is extremely dangerous. Both teams allow less than 63PPG and can get stops defensively when they need them. Free-throw shooting might do in the Panthers, though. They only shoot 65.8%, whereas Jay Wright's ball club is right around 74% on the season. Nova has failed to make it to the postseason the last five seasons, but know they will be their for sure. Winner here will help their seeding immensely.

**California - Arizona:** Cal had a lot of talent coming into this year. However, their talent has simply not performed. They had three double-digit scorers returning from last season including inside force Leon Powe and wing player Richard Midgley. Like fellow Pac-10 buddy Oregon, the Bears have been down in a down conference. Arizona has not been and expect the shooting of Salim Stoudamire and playmaking ability of both Hassan Adam and Mustafa Shakur to get them the win.

**BYU - New Mexico:** A couple of interesting games in the Mountain West tonight as the Lobos of New Mexico play BYU and Utah squares off against Colorado State. BYU has not come close to exceeding preseason expectations for the simple reason that Rafael Araujo, a monster under the hoop that helped them reach the tournament, is now with the Toronto Raptors. Colorado State is just one spot ahead of them in the standings and have unable to get the consistent play out of Matt Nelson, a guy that had some injury problems much of last season. New Mexico simply needs to win tonight to stay on track to reach the tourney. They want to be in the final with Utah so that MWC gets two bids. For that to happen Danny Granger (18.3PPG), second only to Andrew Bogut of Utah in the conference in scoring, must score right around his season average. Take the Lobos.

**Maryland - Clemson:** And finally we have to wrap it all up with an ACC matchup. The Terps have lost to Clemson twice this season and are they going for the trifecta? Gary Williams certainly hopes not, otherwise Maryland will probably miss the NCAA 65-team field for the first time since 1993. Junior Nick Caner-Medly, a small forward with a smooth stroke, and sophomore post man Ekene Ibekwe need to play well for the Terps to advance. Sharrod Ford was one block shy of recording a triple-double in Clemson's win at the Comcast Center back on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. Don't see that happening again.



**Arizona State and Ike Diogu (AP - pictured), an All-American caliber performer, are on the outside looking in going into Thursday. That all can change with a big game out of Diogu and a win over Washington.**