IU focuses on Big Dance

By Steve Herman
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The past two years at Indiana were an aberration.

The Hoosiers not in the NCAA basketball tournament? Unthinkable to a generation of Hoosiers who grew up expecting a postseason berth as almost a divine right.

Already a five-time champion, Indiana was the NCAA runner-up in 2002 with a roster largely of Bob Knight holdovers. But the Hoosiers lost in the second round the next year and failed to make the 65-team tourney field for two years after that.

Through their struggles, the pressure kept increasing on Mike Davis, the heir to Knight's coaching legacy but unable to sustain the school's incredible basketball tradition on his own.

It wasn't until Davis announced his resignation three weeks ago that Indiana started playing more as a team, seemingly free from the cloud of uncertainty.

Indiana finished the regular season with four straight victories, won a quarterfinal game in the Big Ten tournament and ended with a semifinal loss to Ohio State. Still, the Hoosiers (18-11) not only made the NCAA tournament with an at-large bid, they also were seeded sixth in the Oakland Regional and will play 11th-seeded San Diego State on Thursday night at Salt Lake City.

AP PHOTO

Indiana senior Marco Killingsworth, right, battles Ohio's Matt Sylvester for control of the basketball on Saturday in a Big Ten tournament game in Indianapolis. Killingsworth leads the Hoosiers in scoring and rebounding.

"I think right now, we are playing well," said Davis, who will step down at the end of the Hoosiers' tournament run. "Defensively, our intensity has stepped up. The energy and effort we are giving is more important than the wins. I think we are figuring out now that we have to go out and play tough for 40 minutes."

Seniors Marshall Strickland and Sean Kline are the only Indiana players remaining from the 2003 team that reached the NCAA tournament. Roderick Wilmont was a freshman then, but he was redshirted that season and did not play.

Marco Killingsworth and Lewis Monroe, both seniors this season, transferred to Indiana two years ago after playing in the NCAA tournament for Auburn.

Now, each game could be the final one for the seniors, and for Davis.

"It doesn't play too much on our minds," said Wilmont, who still has one more year of eligibility.

"Right now we are really focused on basketball. We got all that stuff out of the way three weeks ago. The guys have focused the last few weeks, just playing and winning games. Now we are in the tournament."

Still, it does give the Hoosiers some added motivation, he said.

"We don't want to just go there and lose a game. We want to go out there and make some noise in the tournament. The guys are going to be ready," Wilmont said.

Killingsworth, who led the Hoosiers in scoring and rebounding this season, knows what his teammate means.

"I went to the Sweet 16 at Auburn. I know the feeling," he said. "I kept telling the young guys throughout the season to play, and once you get in the tournament it is an amazing feeling and experience.

"For the rest of your college career, you will want to get back there. The feeling is going to be there."

San Diego State (24-8) won the Mountain West Conference regular season and tournament, finishing with eight wins in its final 10 games.

Coached by Steve Fisher, the coach of Michigan's 1989 NCAA championship team, the Aztecs are led by Brandon Heath at 18.5 points a game and Marcus Slaughter at 16.6 points and 11 rebounds.

"We are excited that we are playing Indiana in the first round," Fisher said. "We'd better be sure we know everything we can about Indiana.

" I do like the fact that we are going to familiar territory, Salt Lake City, where we've played very well and won this year."

Fisher said he is almost totally unfamiliar with the Hoosiers.

"I've watched bits and pieces of some of their games, but I couldn't name you three players on their team and they probably couldn't name three on our team," he said.

The winner of the Indiana-San Diego State game will play either third-seeded Gonzaga or 14th-seeded Xavier on Saturday.

LOCAL

GOLF

Golf academy director receives national honor

Roger Lundy, director of the Gongaware Junior Golf Academy in Franklin, was named one of the nation's Top 50 Kids Teachers by U.S. Kids Golf, the organization announced Monday.

LUNDY

A past president of the Indiana PGA section, Lundy was honored for developing young golfers.

"The more I teach, the more I learn, and for that my success is a direct reflection on how my students do," said Lundy, who is in his third year at Gongaware Academy.

"I often tell them that I could not become a great teacher without great students."

U.S. Kids Golf, based in Atlanta, manufactures equipment made for kids.

NCAA

Duke ends fifth regular season as top team

Duke was back in a familiar place in The Associated Press' final men's college basketball poll Monday.

The Blue Devils (30-3), the overall No. 1 seed in the NCAA tournament, were the top-ranked team in the season's final poll for the fifth time since 1999.

Connecticut (27-3) and Villanova (25-4), also No. 1 seeds in the NCAA tournament, both dropped one spot in the Top 25 to second and third. Memphis (30-3), the fourth No. 1 seed, moved up one place to fourth after winning the Conference USA tournament.

North Carolina led the final Associated Press women's basketball poll Monday, receiving all 46 first-place votes from a national media panel.

The Tar Heels (29-1), who had never been ranked No. 1 before this season, led the poll the final three weeks. They also were No. 1 the weeks of Jan. 30 and Feb. 6, then fell to third after their sole loss in overtime to Maryland.

A 77-65 victory against then-No. 1 Duke on Feb. 25 sent them back to the top.

Purdue climbed to 11th.

• Winner

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

feds were made to wait while the Los Angeles players finished up some important business. Seems they had to finish up their tournament picks.

Things have lightened up since then, but the brackets in almost every clubhouse are still serious business.

San Francisco Giants pitching coach Dave Righetti hasn't decided if he's going to enter a pool yet, but he still spent part of his morning Monday debating whether Cal, the seventh seed in the Atlanta Regional, can make a serious run.

The Seattle Mariners were hard at work on their picks soon after they arrived at camp Monday. The Mariners have two pools, one of the players' own brackets and the other a random draw of the 65 teams. And across the country in Florida, St. Louis Cardinals infielder Scott Spiezio joked that someone had copied his bracket.

"I've got Duke winning it all," Spiezio said. "I've got a couple of surprises in there, but I can't say what they are. Then I'd I have to split my money."

Ah, money.

An estimated $2.5 billion is reportedly bet on the NCAA tournament, with only $80 million bet legally in Nevada sports books. Bets placed with bookies account for some of the rest, and there are plenty of big-ticket pools.

But much comes from small pools, the $5, $10 and $20 wagered by average Joes who don't otherwise gamble.

"It's a crapshoot," said Mariners pitcher Jamie Moyer, who gets some inside info from his father-in-law, ESPN analyst Digger Phelps. "You're dealing with kids, 17 to 21 years old. That's a lot of pressure. Think of all the pressure and the money that is bet on it, legally and illegally. It's amazing."

Many offices have stopped charging any fees to avoid legal issues. Gontram's pool is free, with prizes donated by local businesses. The law firm of Hodes, Ulman, Pessin and Katz in Towson, Md., foots the bill for its office pool prizes.

The costs go beyond wagers and prizes, too. Arnie Wexler, a certified compulsive gambling counselor who runs a national hot line, worries that something that seems as harmless as an NCAA pool could trigger gambling problems.

"For most people, it's no danger," Wexler said. "But for those that have the personality or the gene, they could be off and running. This could be the start."

And the Chicago-based job-search firm of Challenger, Gray and Christmas estimates the three weeks of the tournament could cost employers as much as $3.8 billion in lost productivity.

In other news

Temple coach resigns after three decades

PHILADELPHIA — John Chaney's scowl was gone, the dark, deep-set eyes concealed behind sunglasses.

CHANEY

The raspy voice, which has boomed to the upper deck of many arenas, was hushed. It was perhaps one final, subdued look at a Hall of Fame basketball coach who realized it was time to leave Temple.

This was indeed a different Chaney.

"Excuse me while I disappear," Chaney said, his shirt unbuttoned and his unraveled tie draped over his shoulders.

With those words, Chaney left the podium Monday and retired after 24 seasons at Temple, ending a 34-year coaching career of fatherly off-the-court mentoring that was sometimes overshadowed by a temper that got the better of him.

"It's always a very traumatic time, but it is time," Chaney said. "Temple gave me a chance to make my own decision and that's the great thing about it. Right now I'm faced with another problem with my wife, so it's the right time to go."

Chaney will not coach the Owls' opening NIT game against Akron on Tuesday night because his wife was scheduled to undergo a procedure for an undisclosed health problem. Assistant Dan Leibovitz will take his place, and it was not clear if Chaney would return to the bench if Temple won.

The 74-year-old Chaney guided Temple to 17 NCAA tournament appearances, including five NCAA regional finals, where he went 0-5 and never made the Final Four. He was twice named national coach of the year and entered the Hall of Fame in 2001.

Chaney wiped away tears from behind his sunglasses and talked at length about a favorite subject, education's role in helping the poor and disadvantaged.

"I'm going to be mean and ornery when I see something that's wrong, and I'm going to try and right it," Chaney said.

• Women

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

North Carolina, Ohio State, LSU and Duke were selected Monday as the No. 1 seeds for the tournament.

All four teams have started atop the NCAA brackets before, but overall top seed North Carolina is the only one with a national title. It's the third No. 1 for North Carolina, which is seeking its second championship since 1994.

Duke has been a No. 1 seed five times, and LSU has been selected atop the bracket three times. Ohio State received its second top seeding and the first for the Buckeyes since 1993.

North Carolina, ranked atop the final AP Poll, and No. 2 Ohio State each won their regular season and conference championships in their respective Atlantic Coast and Big Ten conferences.

North Carolina (29-1) was placed in the Cleveland regional and will open the tournament Saturday in Nashville against Big West champion UC Riverside.

Six-time national champion Tennessee is seeded second in the Cleveland bracket, and Big East regular season champion Rutgers is third.

"It's like the Final Four!" Tar Heels coach Sylvia Hatchell said of the tough Cleveland Regional. "I don't know how any bracket can get tougher than our bracket. ... But hey, that's just the way it is. We have to go play those games."

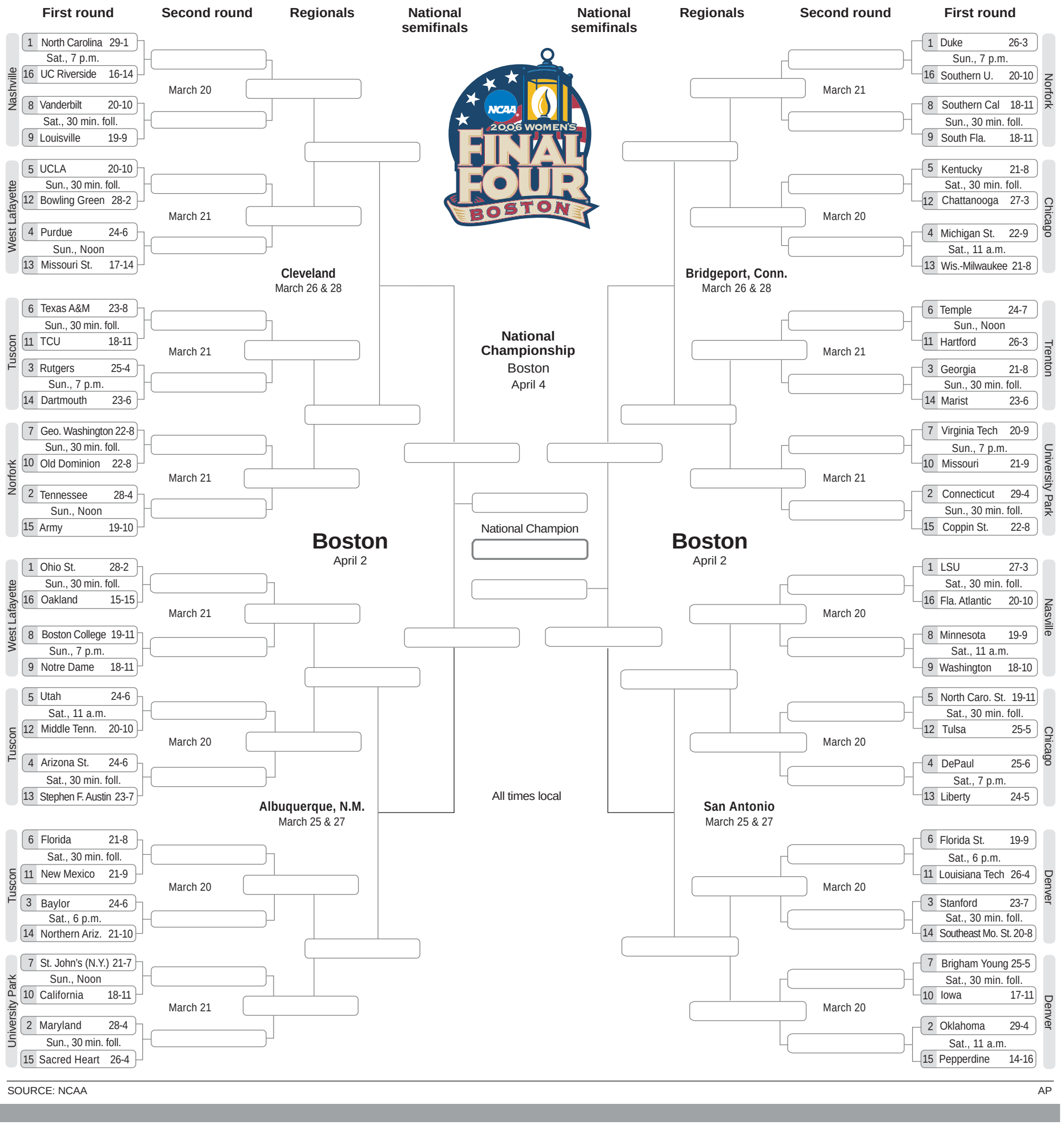
Others in the Nashville subregional are eigth-seeded Vanderbilt, playing at home. The Commodores will take on Big East newcomer Louisville, the No. 9 seeded team. Tennessee gets No. 15 seeded Army, a NCAA tournament newcomer and Patriot League champion on Sunday in Norfolk, Va.

Duke's road to the Final Four runs through Connecticut, and that means a possible matchup with homestate favorite and No. 2 seed UConn. The Blue Devils (26-3) were assigned the Bridgeport Regional, as were the five-time national champion Huskies, who are making their 18th tournament appearance.

The Blue Devils open Sunday in Norfolk against Southwestern Conference champ Southern. The Huskies take on 15th-seeded Coppin State at University Park, Pa. on Sunday.

Georgia earned the third seed in the Bridgeport bracket and is matched up against 14th-seeded Marist on Sunday in Trenton.

2006 NCAA Division I women's basketball championship



SOURCE: NCAA

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