

# Deep Sleepers: Who Could Wreck Brackets In March?

BY DAVID BRANDT  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Underdogs are a big part of NCAA Tournament lore and almost every year a few double-digit seeds make a surprising run deep into the bracket. Here are a few of the candidates — from No. 10 all the way to No. 16 — that could wreck some brackets over the next couple weeks.

## No. 10 PROVIDENCE

Providence is a program with a rich NCAA Tournament history, making Final Four appearances in 1973 and 1987. It also made a run to the Elite Eight in 1997 as a No. 10 seed. The Friars are playing some of their best basketball of the season, getting wins over Creighton and Xavier in the Big East Tournament. They've beaten some really good teams this year, including Xavier (twice) and Villanova.

**DON'T FORGET:** Butler. The Bulldogs are no stranger to deep runs in the tournament, though the No. 10 seed is a little low compared with recent history.

## No. 11 SAN DIEGO STATE

The Aztecs are quite comfortable in the NCAA Tournament, winning games in the Big Dance in 2011, 2013, 2014 and 2015. They're also getting hot at the right time with nine straight wins, including an impressive run through the

Mountain West Tournament. In nonconference play, a win over Gonzaga is the highlight.

**DON'T FORGET:** There are a lot of candidates at this spot. UCLA and Syracuse have ample NCAA history. St. Bonaventure and Loyola of Chicago come from tough basketball conferences. Loyola beat Florida earlier this season.

## No. 12 NEW MEXICO STATE

New Mexico State has won 28 games this season, including an eye-opening victory over sixth-ranked Miami during nonconference play. The last time the Aggies were a No. 12 seed was in 2010, when they narrowly lost to Michigan State 70-67.

**DON'T FORGET:** Davidson. The Wildcats certainly have plenty of momentum. They earned a bid thanks to an Atlantic 10 Tournament championship and have won eight of their past nine games. The only loss was in triple overtime to St. Bonaventure.

## No. 13 BUFFALO

The Bulls rolled through the Mid-American Conference this year and had close losses against several NCAA Tournament teams, including Cincinnati, South Dakota State, St. Bonaventure and Syracuse. Buffalo made the Big Dance in 2015 and 2016, playing West Virginia and Miami tough before falling in both



Georgia State head coach Ron Hunter celebrates with his team after their victory over Texas-Arlington in the Sun Belt Conference championship game in New Orleans on Sunday. AP PHOTO BY GERALD HERBERT

games. This could be the year the Bulls finally break through, though first-round opponent Arizona is a difficult one.

**DON'T FORGET:** Marshall. The Thundering Herd are in the NAAs for the first time since 1987 and have some momentum after winning the Conference USA Tournament.

## No. 14 BUCKNELL

Bucknell, which won the Patriot League, had one of

the biggest upsets in NCAA Tournament history when it knocked off Kansas as a No. 14 seed in 2005. The Bison also beat Arkansas in the 2006 tournament and last year as a No. 13 seed played West Virginia tough.

**DON'T FORGET:** Stephen F. Austin. The Lumberjacks knocked off West Virginia in 2016 as a No. 14 seed and then gave Notre Dame a terrific game before falling 76-75.

## No. 15 GEORGIA STATE

Georgia State isn't a regular in the tournament, but the Panthers have made the most of their opportunities in the past. They beat Wisconsin in 2001 as a No. 11 seed and shocked Baylor 57-56 in 2015 as a No. 14 seed. The Panthers won the Sun Belt Tournament.

## No. 16 PENN

Is this the year a No. 16 seed finally beats a No. 1?

Probably not, but the Ivy League champion Quakers might have a fighting chance. They haven't won a game in the NCAA Tournament since beating Nebraska in 1994, but they have a history of competitive losses in the Big Dance and even made a Final Four back in 1979. The Ivy League is also responsible for one of the biggest 16-1 scares of all-time, when Georgetown narrowly beat Princeton 50-49 in 1989.

# Florida Gets Stranded In St. Louis Before NCAA Tournament

BY MARK LONG  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (AP) — At least Florida coach Mike White could joke about his team's predicament: Getting stranded about 900 miles from home after the Southeastern Conference Tournament because the team's chartered airplane was on a military mission.

This was Arch Madness. "Had a nice spring break up in St. Louis, fighting the cold weather," White said Monday. "It's crazy. We spent four nights in a hotel to play one game. If our guys aren't rested for practice, I don't know if we'll ever be rested."

The 23rd-ranked Gators found themselves stuck in Missouri following an 80-72 setback against Arkansas in the SEC quarterfinals. Then the waiting began.

Florida's charter flight was called to the Middle East to assist troops, leaving players, coaches, staff, cheerleaders and band members stuck in a hotel for two extra days.

Given how Florida (20-12) performed defensively against the Razorbacks, maybe the biggest surprise is that White didn't find a way to get his team to a gym for extra work.

The Gators finally got on a plane Sunday afternoon — about 40 hours after the game ended — but only after a few more delays. They had to wait for a rested flight crew, a mechanical repair and finally some deicing.

They were still on the tarmac when the NCAA Tournament selection show started, learning via social media they were a No. 6 seed in the East Region. On Thursday night, Florida will play the winner of St. Bonaventure (25-7) vs. UCLA (21-11) in Dallas. "I would rather know who we're playing and be able to spend three or four days prepping for that team," White said. "That's the (difference) between being 20th and 21st (in seeding)."

Florida has advanced to the Elite Eight in five straight NCAA Tournament appearances (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2017), including last year's run that ended one win shy of the Final Four. But this team is different from all those others, and not just because of its dozen losses and up-and-down ways.

"These guys aren't really animated. Really, really nice guys. Too nice of a group, really," White said. "I'd like to see this group one day tear up a locker room

after we lose, but that's not happening."

White's mostly introverted team has struggled to communicate on the court throughout the season. Even though the Gators improved on defense late in the season, their deficiencies were exposed against Arkansas.

That, coupled with having lost seven of 12 league games down the stretch, has

few outsiders giving the Gators much of a chance to get past the opening weekend of the tournament.

White remembers the way his team found motivation in being pegged for an opening-round upset in 2017.

"We'll use it again," he said. "Who knows how much of a factor it will be with these guys? These guys are hard to tick off. My guys, I'm not sure I've found

the button that produces a bunch of edge, but we'll throw it at the wall, for sure."

One thing the Gators have in their favor is a stacked backcourt. Speedy point guard Chris Chiozza and sharpshooters KeVaughn Allen, Jalen Hudson and Egor Koulechov give White plenty of scoring options and a number of guys who can be tough to prepare for

and even more difficult to defend.

"Our backcourt gets a lot of headlines and deservedly so," White said, recalling Chiozza's running 3-pointer at the buzzer that beat Wisconsin in the Sweet 16 at Madison Square Garden a year ago. "Chris Chiozza showed it last year — where single-handedly a guard can make a big play to propel his team."

The Greeneville Sun will publish an information-packed *Election Edition* on April 7. This special section will also be available on [GreenevilleSun.com](http://GreenevilleSun.com) April 9 until after the election and will appear in *The Greeneville Neighbor News* on April 11. Candidates will be receiving questionnaires relevant to the offices which they are running for. The *Election Edition* will be published prior to Early Voting to help voters make informed decisions about candidates before casting their ballots. With nearly 60,000 local readers in print and online, your advertising message in the *Election Edition* will reach more than 85% of homes in Greeneville and Greene County. Be sure your message asking for their votes is included in the *Election Edition* if, "You're in it...to win it!"

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