



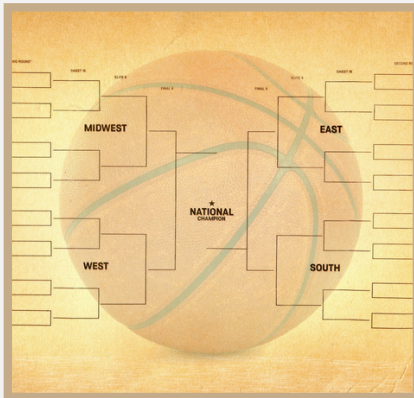
YOUR GUIDE TO MARCH MADNESS

*From the brackets to the buzzer-beaters
to fan-friendly food...here's everything
you need to survive March Madness.*

Starting with Selection Sunday on March 12, the nation will be immersed in March Madness. From bracket pools to Cinderella stories, here's your all-inclusive guide to the madness that'll be what everyone is talking about for the next few weeks.

HOW IT WORKS

- The NCAA Men's and Women's Division I Basketball Committees are responsible for selecting, seeding and bracketing the field for the NCAA Tournament. The committee is made up of 10 members who are nominated by conference to serve five year terms. Typically, the committee is made up of college athletic directors.
- There are 32 automatic bids for teams that win their conference tournaments. The rest of the spots are filled with the best teams as determined by the selection committee.



- The bracket is divided up into four different regions, west, south, east and midwest. Teams are seeded #1-16 in a respective bracket region with #1 being the highest ranked team. The committee places the teams in a region, it's not necessarily done by geographical location. The #1 overall seed teams will be able to choose the location of their first two games of the tournament.
- All games, with the exception of the Final Four games, are guaranteed to be on neutral courts

LADIES FIRST

- The first women's NCAA tournament began in 1982 — 43 years after the men's debut. This is only the second year the women's tournament has been allowed to use "March Madness" in its promotion.
- Defending champions South Carolina landed the top overall seed, followed by Indiana, Stanford, and Virginia Tech.
- An interesting fact to note. While the men play two-20-minute halves, the women play four-10-minute quarters.
- The team to beat is the South Carolina Gamecocks that finished the season undefeated.



THE MEN TAKE THE COURT

- Alabama claims the top spot with the overall No. 1 seed. The other No. 1 seeds go to Kansas, Purdue and Houston.

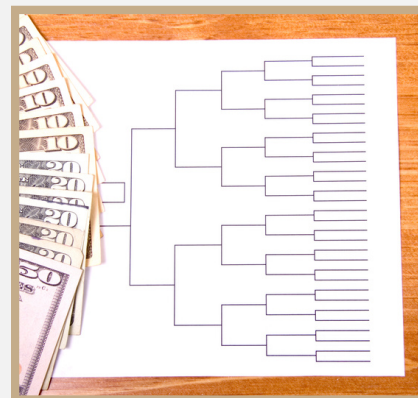


- One face we're missing this year is Sister Jean. The 103-year old nun is St. Joseph's biggest fan but the team didn't make this year's tournament. She recently released her memoir "Wake Up With A Purpose."

- The defending champion Kansas Jayhawks landed a No. 1 seed but the most important win for the Jayhawks is the return of their head coach Bill Self. Self checked into the hospital on March 8 with chest tightness. He had two stents placed to treat blocked arteries. Self will return in time to pace the sidelines during the tournament.

PICKING YOUR BRACKET

- When choosing your bracket in this single-elimination tournament, remember that the most likely upset is a No. 12 team over a No. 5. Only once in the tournament's history has a No. 16 team upset a No. 1 seeded team.
- Does it feel like everyone around you is filling out a bracket? They are. Experts expect the numbers of brackets submitted to decline (fewer office pools), but the number of people placing bets is expected to top 36 million. Your office pool is a significant piece of the illegal betting that's part of the \$8.5B bet on the tournament each year.



- When in doubt, go with your gut. Winning your bracket is more luck than it is basketball knowledge. Want to pick your teams by colors or team mascots? Do it. Most brackets have an autofill button that is a great option too. (You can play in our no pressure bracket for both the men's and women's tournament).

- The tournament itself began in 1939. The term “March Madness” originates from Illinois High School basketball, but the term was officially copyrighted by the NCAA in 1988. By 2005, the NCAA tournament had become the second most popular sporting event amongst gamblers in the sports books, office pools or online. (Super Bowl is the most popular).



- Many companies have turned the tournament into a team-building opportunity with various contests. Take Warren Buffet and his \$1M a year for life promise for an employee who picks a perfect bracket in the first round. The chances of picking a perfect bracket? 1 in 9.2 quintillions. For reference, there are 31.6M seconds in a year, so 9.2 quintillion seconds is 292 billion years.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- Vasectomies increase during March Madness because it's doctor's orders to be a couch potato, so men might as well heal while watching basketball.



- Feeling blue about your bracket? Since 2002, with an exception of two teams, every team that has won it all has had blue among its primary school colors.
- Experts project hourly corporate losses of roughly \$1.9B due to workers whose productivity is diverted by March Madness.
- It's not a game day party without memorable food. Check out our [Tailgate Treats](#) for slam dunk recipes.

HOW TO WATCH

Women's March Madness

The tournament starts on Friday, March 17 with the championship game on Sunday, April 2 in Dallas. [Here's the full schedule.](#)

[Play in our women's tournament bracket](#) for a chance at prizes

Men's March Madness

The tournament starts on Thursday, March 16 with the championship game on April 3 in Houston. [Here's the full schedule.](#)

[Play in our men's tournament bracket](#) for a chance at prizes

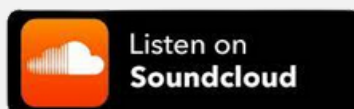
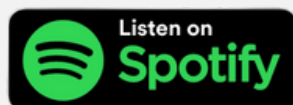
ABOUT LAST NIGHT'S GAME

Why are they running off the field? What's an out? Unimaginable sports questions like that inspired brother-sister duo Amy and Scott to start Last Night's Game. When searching for a source that breaks down sports in an easy-to-understand way, they couldn't find anything. So they created it.

In addition to the Sports Curious podcast, which has surpassed its 250th episode, Last Night's Game publishes tri-weekly content on its website, email newsletters and daily conversations across social media.



Make sure to follow along with us on social media for all of the March Madness excitement (and then some).



Want more pop culture and sports in 5 minutes a week? Check out our podcast.