

# Tennessee sends seven teams to the NCAA Tournament

By **BRIAN ESTES**  
Staff Reporter

The state of Tennessee is well represented at this year's tournament, as four women's teams – Tennessee, Vanderbilt, MTSU, and UT-Chattanooga – and three men's teams – Memphis, Tennessee, and Belmont – all made the trip to the big dance.

Of this group, the Memphis Tigers and the Tennessee women's teams likely have the best chance at advancing deep in the tournament.

The Tigers are a number one seed in the Oakland bracket and the Lady Volunteers are a number two seed in the Cleveland bracket.

The Lady Raiders of MTSU and the Lady Mocs of Chattanooga were looking to make a run but had their hopes squelched in the first round. After knocking off UNC and NC State in the first round the past two years, the MTSU Lady Raiders were looking to pull an upset for the third straight year but fell short against Utah 76-71.

Sun Belt Player of the Year Chrissy Givens was held to just 4 points in the

loss. Meanwhile, the Lady Mocs of UT-Chattanooga saw their 27 game win-streak come to an end against the Kentucky Lady Wildcats 69-59.

The Lady Mocs had held the nation's longest win streak.

The Belmont men's basketball team, which is led by Justin Hare and former Hendersonville High School standout Andy Wicke, had a tough first round matchup with the UCLA Bruins and were thoroughly beaten 78-44.

One of the bright spots for Belmont, who was making its first NCAA tournament appearance, was that it was able to play well in the early going and staked themselves out to an 18-12 lead.

The Tennessee men's team was heavily favored against Winthrop in their opening round game, but struggled through most of the second half before managing to eke out a 63-61 victory. Chris Lofton knocked down a long 2-pointer near the baseline, as he was falling down and being pressured, to create the winning margin for Tennessee.

Lofton scored the basket with 0.4 sec-

onds remaining.

However, the Volunteers were turned away by Wichita State in the second round 80-73. P.J. Couisnard knocked down a 3-pointer to highlight a 7-0 run that gave the Shockers a 70-65 lead over the Vols with under a minute to play. The Volunteers were led by C.J. Watson's 20 points.

The Memphis Tigers, the top seed in the Oakland bracket, faced Oral Roberts in the first round and had little difficulty as they ran past the Golden Eagles 94-78.

The Tigers are hoping to make a deep tournament run, and news of Kansas's 77-73 upset loss to Davidson made a large impact on the Tigers' chances.

Many analysts had been predicting that Kansas would have a great chance to knock off Memphis in the Sweet 16.

Memphis will now be playing the winner between Bradley and Pittsburgh if it is able to advance past 2nd round opponent Bucknell.

The Tigers, who knocked off UCLA and Gonzaga in the regular season, are led by Rodney Carney (17.9 ppg, 4.4 rpg)

The Lady Volunteers come into the tournament looking to claim their seventh national title, their first since 1998.

Tennessee advanced all the way to the Final Four last season before being upset by Michigan State.

Alexis Hornbuckle was not expected to participate in the tournament after breaking her wrist against Vanderbilt on Feb. 12, but the Lady Volunteers recently learned last week that Hornbuckle had been cleared to play.

The Lady Vols, who take on Army in the first round, look to have a tough route to the final four as a potential match-up with Big East regular season champion Rutgers looms, as do the Lady Tarheels of North Carolina, who are ranked #1 in the nation.

The eighth seeded Vanderbilt Lady Commodores faced the Louisville Lady Cardinals late Saturday night on Vanderbilt's home floor. A win would set up a potential showdown with top-ranked North Carolina on Monday, March 20. The Lady Commodores are led by the play of Caroline Williams and All-SEC point guard Dee Davis.

## SPORTS EDITORIAL

# SIDERS SAYS: "A little Madness is good for everyone"

By **NEIL SIDERS**  
Sports Editor

March Madness has kicked off with the first round of the NCAA men's basketball tournament commencing this weekend.

The selection Sunday complaints from the teams whose bubbles were burst are now a distant memory. The teams are now cut down to 16, and after next week, only four will remain.

With the tournament flying by like it is, spectators need to take the opportunity to enjoy this great sports spectacle.

The NCAA tournament offers sports fans a chance to see the best in Division I basketball, with teams like Univer-

sity of North Carolina, Duke, and the University of Connecticut facing off to establish a clear undisputed winner, a subject that college football needs to learn something about.

"Madness" is an appropriate term when describing the style of play that the single elimination format encourages in each game.

The increased level of intensity leads to spectacular individual performances and incredible game winning buzzer beaters like the shot that Chris Lofton hit for the University of Tennessee to defeat Winthrop during the first day of tournament play.

Along with the electric atmosphere, the fact that all the nation's top teams are involved and have a chance to

claim the title adds to the appeal for fans. But, there is another factor that makes the month of March the most exciting in college basketball.

The aspect that sets the NCAA tournament on a podium high above the rest of the collegiate athletic world is that, not only the traditional powerhouse teams compete, but the teams from smaller conferences, schools like University of Alabama Birmingham, get a chance to prove they can hang on the floor with big schools like the University of Kentucky.

Then, there are the upsets like the George Mason victory over Michigan State or Bradley University over Kansas.

Everybody loves an underdog, and

why not! To press on and defy the odds is an athletic representation of the American dream.

Plus, March Madness always provides a Cinderella team, one who keeps winning games that the experts say they should lose.

The parody that is inherent in the tournament keeps the fans on their toes every year. With all the chances for a team to win an upset game and totally destroy everyone's bracket predictions each year, the March Madness provides a unique experience.

While there can only be one champion, every team enters on the same terms with an equal chance to win, and that fact will keep fans looking forward to the month of March.

**Non-collegiate baseball players needed.**  
**Catchers and Pitchers preferred**  
**Contact Neil Siders:**  
**822-3460**

### Upcoming Pioneers baseball:

March 21  
v. Motlow State  
Garrett Baseball Field  
1 p.m.

March 28  
v. Monroe  
Garrett Baseball Field  
1 p.m.