

A look at the second round of NCAA tournament

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Arizona is the only double-digit seed to crack the round of 16. Heck, the Wildcats are the only team seeded lower than fifth to still be playing in the NCAA tournament.

The selection committee can feel free to pat themselves on the back as the top three seeds in all four regions moved on to the third round with two No. 4s and one No. 5 still alive.

The East Regional (Pittsburgh, Duke, Villanova, Xavier) and the South (North Carolina, Oklahoma, Syracuse, Gonzaga) both have their top four seeds still going, while the West has its top three (Connecticut, Memphis, Missouri) and No. 5 Purdue.

The Midwest's top three (Louisville, Michigan State, Kansas) will be joined by the 12th-seeded Wildcats.

From 2000 through last season, a total of only three regions had sent its top four teams on to the regional semifinals: the Midwest

in 2001, the East Rutherford regional in 2004 and the West in 2007.

The only top four seeds not to advance this year were Wake Forest, which lost to Cleveland State in the first round, and Washington, which lost to Purdue in the second round.

Memphis has the longest current streak of round of 16 appearances at four, while North Carolina and Kansas have made three in a row.

Since 1979, there have been only four years when no double-digit seed reached the regional semifinals.

BIGGEST EAST:@ The Big East is the only conference to have three teams reach the Final Four in the same season (1985) and it holds the record for teams in a tournament field having had eight twice.

This season many said the Big East might have been the best conference ever with a record nine of its 16 teams being in the Top 25 in a poll in January. On

Selection Sunday, it became the first league to have three No. 1 seeds in the same tournament.

Is it any wonder the Big East added another line to its list of laurels this season? With Pittsburgh, Louisville, Connecticut, Syracuse and Villanova all still alive, the Big East has a record five teams in the round of 16.

The Big 12 has three teams still going (Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri), while the Atlantic Coast Conference (North Carolina, Duke) and Big Ten (Michigan State, Purdue) have two each.

The Big East had four teams in the third round three times: 1985, 2003 and 2006.

The Big East, ACC and Big Ten all had seven teams in the 2009 field while the Big 12 and Pac-10 had six each.

Of the nine conferences that had more than one team in the field, three (Southeastern, Horizon League, Mountain West) didn't have anybody advance to the second week of the tournament.

HARDEN TIMES:@ Arizona State's James Harden, the Pac-10's player of the year, wasn't able to match his season scoring average in his two NCAA games combined.

Harden averaged 20.4 points this season on 49.5 percent shooting, including hitting 36.7 percent from 3-point range. He was nowhere near those numbers in his first NCAA appearance.

In Friday's win over Temple, the sophomore had nine points on 1-of-8 shooting and he made one of three shots from beyond the arc. In Sunday's 78-67 loss to Syracuse, he had 10 points — all in the second half — on 2-for-10 shooting while missing five 3-point attempts.

"My teammates talked to me in the locker room (at halftime). They said they needed me. I shouldn't have waited until the second half. I should have been aggressive in the first half as I was in the second half. But I was trying to be more aggressive, create more open shots in the middle of the zone. You know, that

was basically it," Harden said.

He said Friday's poor shooting didn't carry over to the second round.

"You know, (Saturday) when we had our practice, shooting a lot of shots and making a lot of shots, so definitely that confidence, the shots just weren't falling today," he said. "I had a lot of good looks, and like I said, I didn't make shots. We just didn't make shots that we needed to cut the lead closer or even win the game."

TWELVE TO GO:@ The 5-12 matchups have become one of the fun things to watch in the first round with the lower-seeded teams winning three of the four matchups this year.

Of the three that did keep the 12s' tradition going, only Arizona will be playing when the regional semifinals get under way.

The Wildcats, who beat fifth-seeded Utah in the opening round, moved on with a 71-57 victory over No. 13 Cleveland State on Sunday.

"You know, I think the thing is in the NCAA tournament, seedings are, I think they get them right probably 99 percent of the time, and in our case with our record coming in, it's probably correct," Arizona interim coach Russ Pennell said. "But once you start playing the games, seeding, I think you can throw it out a lot of times, because it really comes down to one-game seasons, who's playing well on that particular night. And for the two nights that we've played here, you know, we've played pretty well."

Wisconsin, which beat fifth-seeded Florida State on Friday, lost 60-49 to Xavier on Sunday. Western Kentucky, a 12 seed which won two straight years, lost to Gonzaga on Saturday night in the second round.

Northern Iowa was the only 12 seed not to advance, losing to Purdue in the opening round.

TRIPLE-DOUBLES:@ Kansas sophomore Cole Aldrich had 13 points, 20 rebounds and 10 blocked shots in the Jayhawks' 60-43 victory over Dayton on Sunday. It was the sixth official triple-double in the NCAA tournament, a list that started in

1986 when steals and blocks were formally added as statistics. Two year earlier, assists were added.

Aldrich joins Gary Grant (Michigan, 1987), Shaquille O'Neal (LSU, 1992), David Cain, St. John's (1993), Andre Miller (Utah, 1998) and Dwyane Wade (Marquette, 2003) on the official list.

Aldrich made his more special because he did it in his hometown of Minneapolis.

"I'm just so proud of him," teammate Tyrel Reed said. "He has been playing this way all year. And for him to get this on the biggest stage, I think it's just awesome for him. Especially in his hometown."

The unofficial list has eight triple-doubles, three by Cincinnati's Oscar Robertson and two by Magic Johnson of Michigan State.

The first triple-double was also by a Kansas player. B.H. Born had 26 points, 15 rebounds and 13 blocks for the Jayhawks in their 69-68 loss to Indiana in the 1953 championship game.

THREE TURN:@ Cleveland State was the lowest-seeded team to win a first-round game and the 13th-seeded Vikings went 6-for-14 on 3s in their 84-69 victory over fourth-seeded Wake Forest, a very good outing considering they shot 31.9 percent from beyond the arc during the season.

On Sunday, Cleveland State struggled to a 3-for-23 effort on 3s in a 71-57 loss to 12th-seeded Arizona.

Cedric Jackson, who hit Cleveland State's biggest 3-pointer of the season when he made a 60-footer at the buzzer for a 72-69 victory over then-No. 11 Syracuse at the Carrier Dome, went 3-for-4 on 3s against Wake Forest then missed all five of his attempts against Arizona.

"I thought Arizona's zone was really tough today. That's been our nemesis all year, the zone, because when people play us man to man, we really execute well," Cleveland State coach Gary Waters said. "But the zone, you've got to hit shots, and if you don't hit shots, sometimes it's difficult to handle. We went 3-for-23, and it's hard to beat a team going 3-for-23 from the 3-point line."

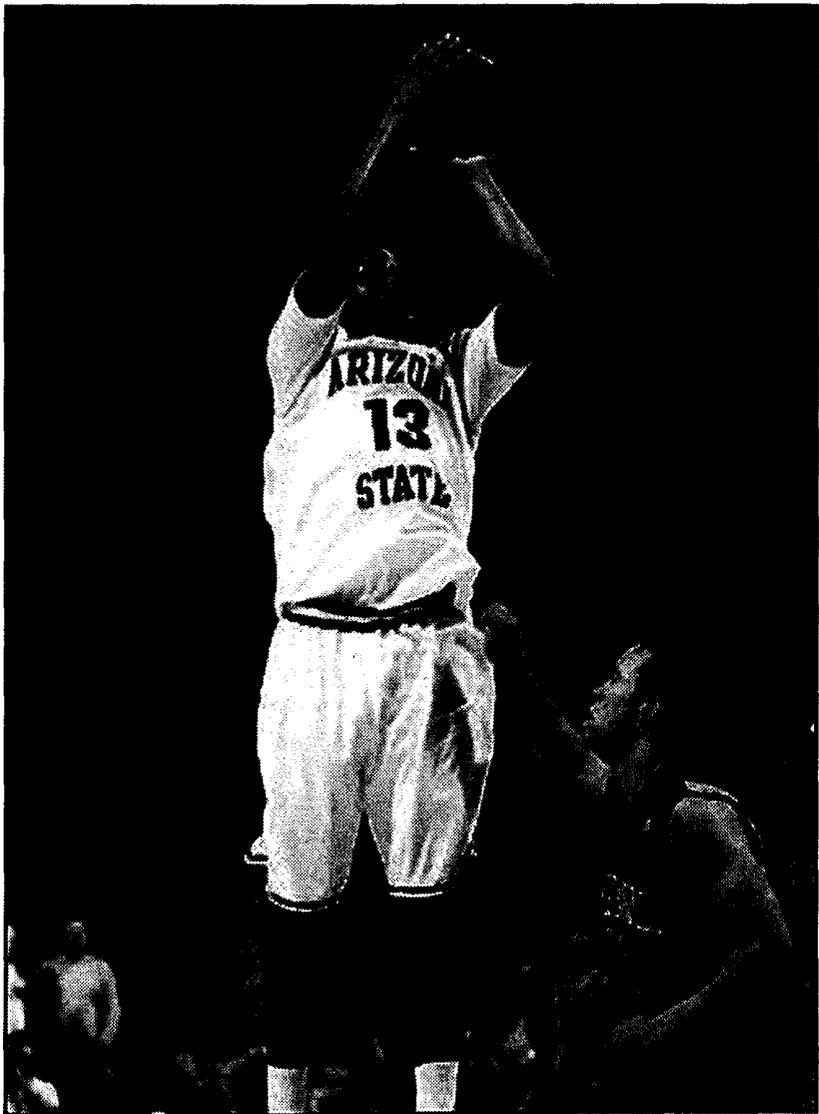


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