

Eye On Sports

Flyers Sneak Into Playoffs



By Bryan Drissel
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This time last year the Philadelphia Flyers were in the middle of a complete retooling project. They were trying to get back their respectability after the worst season in franchise history. This year the Flyers will be playing for the Stanley Cup as one of the 16 teams to make it to the top.

The 2007-2008 season has been marked by ups and down for the Flyers since the beginning. They got off to a great start, winning six of the first seven games and dominating at the Wachovia Center for the first month of the season, at one point even being in second place in the Eastern Conference. Then there were losing streaks and struggles with injuries, but the team kept within reach of a playoff spot, often battling with teams like Boston, Buffalo, Washington and Carolina for the last three playoff spots in the East. The Flyers had struggled against the rival New Jersey Devils all season; the Flyers were unable to solve future hall of fame Devils' goalie Martin Brodeur.

As the end of the season approached, the Flyers got more and more desperate to clinch a playoff spot. It came down to the last three games of the season where they had to compete with the Carolina Hurricanes for the final playoff spot. The Flyers suffered a huge setback when they lost to another rival, the Pittsburgh Penguins, 4-2, but they still had a chance. They either had to win the last two games or win one and Carolina lose one of the last two.

The Flyers were able to defeat the hated Devils 3-0, completely dominating much of the game on April 4th while Carolina lost to Florida 4-3.

The Flyers will likely play the Pittsburgh Penguins who battle for first place in the Eastern Conference. The Penguins have been very good since the All-Star break and have played very well against the Flyers recently. The beginning of the season the Flyers dominated the Penguins, but as of late, the Penguins have taken over behind Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin. It should be a very good series.



The Philadelphia Flyers play the Washington Capitals in the first round of the playoffs. Photo Courtesy Philadelphiaflyers.com

And They're Off!!!



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Opening day for Philadelphia Phillies baseball is always a highly anticipated event. This year is even more so because the Phillies are the defending National League East champions. They bailed out of the playoffs in the first round last year, but expectations will be higher this year.

Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter threw out the ceremonial first pitch to open the 2008 season at Citizens Bank

Park on March 31st. The sellout crowd celebrated with the usual festivities that surround opening day which this year was against the Washington Nationals.

Unfortunately, the festivities were about all that was worth celebrating. The Phillies had the early lead, but the Phillies bullpen imploded mid-way through the game and gave up six straight runs in the fifth and sixth innings. The Phillies managed to tie it behind homeruns by Chase Utley and reigning MVP Jimmy Rollins, but the pitching staff, namely Tom Gordon, couldn't hold the Nation-

als in the ninth inning, giving up five runs. The Phillies ended up losing 11-6.

There are still a lot of games left in the season, so there is no reason to think the Phillies will be a bad team this season. The Phillies should be in the competition with the New York Mets and Atlanta Braves for the NL East division title or a wild-card spot. Rollins, Utley, and Ryan Howard are the leaders and are good enough to carry the team into the playoffs.

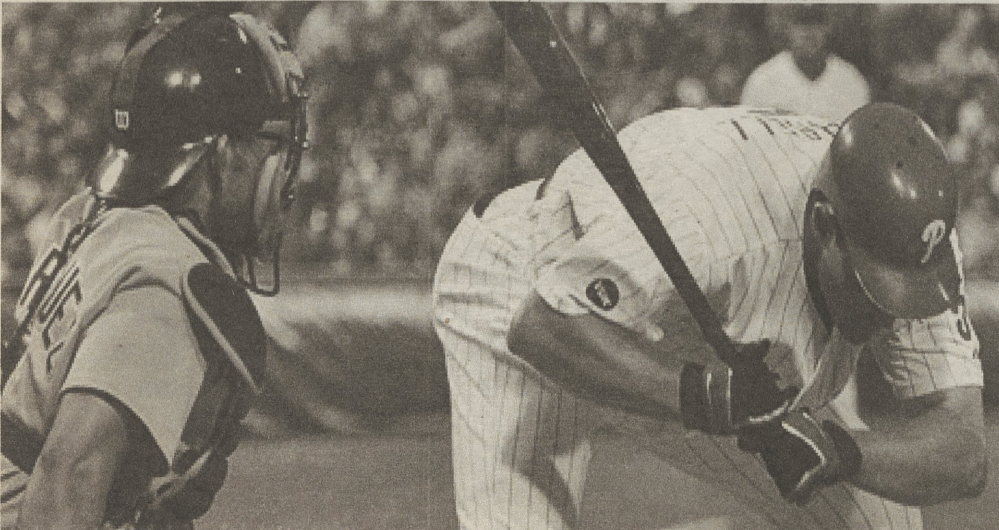
Historic March Madness Ends With Dramatic Comeback

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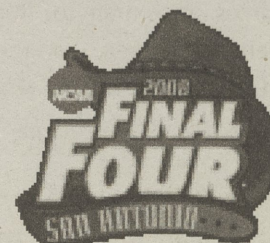
This year saw the first time that four number one ranked teams made the final four: UCLA, Memphis, Kansas and North Carolina. Kansas and Memphis went on to face each other in the final. Kansas tied the score at 63 with Mario Chalmer's 3-pointer with two seconds left.

Kansas was down by three with time winding down when Chalmer's shot went in and Kansas celebrated. Memphis had one last chance, but the shot missed and went to overtime.

Kansas outscored Memphis 12-5 in overtime to win 75-68. Chalmer's shot with two seconds left is already being called "the most historical shot in Kansas history" by Kansas coach Bill Self.



Pat Burrell bats for the Phillies in the opener against Washington. (Photo Courtesy PhiladelphiaPhillies.com)



(photo courtesy of ncaa.com)