

Top Incoming Freshmen

For the last 4 years, Zyheir Moss and Braylon Tate have been jockeying for the title of #1 recruit in this class, both of which are worthy of going #1 in the upcoming draft. Moss officially gets the nod due to his height at the PG position. Small Forward and Oklahoma State commit, Ladreyous Jones, reclassified from the next draft class to this one, and he will make an instant impact for the Cowboys. The talent in the top 10 is very spread out, with only Kentucky having multiple top 10 recruits. Kansas State however, landed the #10 recruit in Tyler McCaskill, and the #11 recruit in SG Kenny Maynor. Both committed shortly after the Kansas State championship run and honored their commitments even after a down season from the Wildcats.

Overall this is a very top heavy recruiting class. Zyheir Moss, Braylon Tate, and LaDreyous Jones all look to have All-NBA written all over them. Chandler Walton looks like a project who could develop into an allstar, while the rest of the class seems to be filled with a lot of athleticism.

#1 Zyheir Moss

Position: Point Guard

School: Washington

Height: 6'6

Weight: 205

Profile: Zyheir Moss is one of the most hyped prospects in recent memory. He committed to Washington over Oregon and UCLA, and he looks to build on a surprising Final 4 run for the Huskies this year. He and Paxton Smith will be a solid 1-2 punch in the backcourt. Moss has incredible vision while he is out on the floor and that is his best weapon. He creates for his teammates very well, but is also a capable scorer. He drives very well and uses his height to finish over defenders. He is athletic, but is not the fastest or strongest player in the draft by any means. He is solid in the mid range, but still needs to develop a 3 point shot. Moss has all the tools to average 20 points, lead the league in assists, while pulling in a decent amount of rebounds from the guard position.

NBA Comparison: Better shooting Lonzo Ball

#2 Braylon Tate

Position: Shooting Guard

School: Duke

Height: 6'6

Weight: 217

Profile: Braylon Tate could very well come in and lead the NCAA in scoring this season at Duke. He is a plus athlete who uses a quick first step to get to the rim whenever he wants, and he knows how to finish when he gets there as well. He loves to size up his defender and play iso ball, which he is very good at. Braylon has a very solid floater when he gets into the lane, and will even take smaller defenders down in the low post where he has a solid fade away. His 3 point shot needs to develop before he can be a consistent threat from downtown, but he has a very good mid range. Tate has been described by his coaches as a gym rat, so it seems like it's only a matter of time before he is consistent from range. Not only is he an elite offensive player, but he has shown the ability to play solid on ball

defense, and he has a knack for coming up with steals. He could become a 2-way threat in the NBA.

NBA Comparison: Less polished Kobe Bryant

#3 LaDreyous Jones

Position: Small Forward

School: Oklahoma State

Height: 6'8

Weight: 225

Profile: LaDreyous Jones was the #1 player in the next recruiting class before he made the decision to reclassify. On any given year, he would have shot to the #1 spot of that class as well, but Zyheir Moss and Braylon Tate have the top 2 spots locked up. While there is talk that some of Boone Pickens' fortune was needed to bring Jones to Oklahoma State, he is a great kid who does not seem like he will get mixed up in that. He committed to OSU over Oklahoma, LSU, and Kansas. Jones is listed at 6'8, but he has not looked much shorter than OSU Center, Temple Brown, who stands at 7'1. LaDreyous has a very smooth jump shot and can hit from anywhere on the floor. He has a nasty eurostep when he drives, and he does a great job of finishing at the rim. He is super lanky, so he is able to block a decent amount of shots. He does need to work on his passing and finding teammates. He is a solid athlete, especially for his size. He could add a little bit of muscle so he does not get pushed around down low as easily.

NBA Comparison: Poor mans Kevin Durant

#4 Chandler Walton

Position: Center

School: Kansas

Height: 7'3

Weight: 240

Profile: Chandler Walton is a monster presence down low with his size alone. It is not everyday you have an 18 year old, 7'3 center who can shoot from range. Walton is an average athlete, but at 7'3 you don't expect much from him in the athleticism department. He is a solid defender and is always positioned well, and he has shown he can score at all 3 levels. He works very well in the pick and pop game. He can hit the 3 point shot, but not consistent enough for it to be a real threat. Currently, he converted 31% of his 3 point shot attempts. He runs the floor very well for a guy of his size. He is not the best passer, and despite his height, he does not do a very good job of rebounding. While he might not be the best player in this class, his ceiling is higher than anyone's due to his unique build and skillset.

NBA Comparison: Kristaps Porzingis lite

#5 Bakari Jackson

Position: Shooting Guard

School: Florida State

Height: 6'6

Weight: 221

Profile: Bakari Jackson chose Florida State over rival Florida, North Carolina, and Memphis. Florida State is getting the best athlete in this recruiting class. Bakari has an incredible

vertical leap that he uses to finish over defenders, as well as a quick first step to get past defenders. He struggles shooting the 3 ball, hitting only 28% of his 3's his senior year of high school, but he has a very advanced mid range game. His athleticism will help him be a solid defender at the next level. We would not be surprised to see him win a dunk contest or two. Jackson is solid at creating his own shot off the dribble, and he has a killer step back jumper that he hits on at a high rate.

NBA Comparison: DeMar DeRozan

#6 KJ Sampson

Position: Point Guard

School: Kentucky

Height: 6'3

Weight: 199

Profile: KJ Sampson has a smooth left handed stroke. He is one of the most well rounded PGs in this recruiting class, and should be one of the first PGs in the draft class as well. He has an all around game and does not have any characteristic that really wows scouts, but he does not seem to have any glaring weaknesses either. He is at his best when he is driving and kicking to an open man on the wing. He is a very crafty PG who seems to maneuver his way through the paint despite not being an elite athlete. While he will be one of the better players in the NCAA this season, scouts are split on his career outlook. Some feel like he will be limited to a 6th man role, while others seem to believe he could be a solid starter for an NBA team.

NBA Comparison: Post ACL surgery Derrick Rose

#7 Darius Van Gundy

Position: Power Forward

School: Arizona State

Height: 6'10

Weight: 233

Profile: Van Gundy is a solid scorer in the post and he seems like a player you can play through. He has a wide variety of post moves at his disposal, and he has an above average mid range so he can work the high post as well. He is a solid athlete, and he runs the floor well, but does not wow you with any feats of athleticism. His size helps him on the defensive end, but he could use work pulling down rebounds. In a class without many solid power forwards, Van Gundy should be the first power forward drafted in the upcoming NBA draft if he decides to go pro.

NBA Comparison: Marcus Morris without the 3 point shot

#8 Nadab Joseph

Position: Center

School: Baylor

Height: 7'1

Weight: 232

Profile: Just when you thought that the Baylor defense couldn't get any better, they add elite defender, Nadab Joseph. Baylor was already the #4 defensive team in the nation last year, but they should be even better this year after returning all 5 starters with the addition of Joseph. Nadab Joseph is a long athletic center who is a shot blocking machine. His senior

year of high school he averaged 19 points, 15 rebounds, and 8 blocks a game. While he might not ever be a prominent scorer at the next level, he could very easily lead the league in blocks and be a perennial candidate for defensive POY. If he can develop any sort of an offensive game, he could be one of the better players to come out of this draft class.

NBA Comparison: Hasaan Whiteside

#9 Shaun Murphy

Position: Small Forward

School: Kentucky

Height: 6'6

Weight: 212

Profile: Shaun Murphy committed to Kentucky over Louisville and UCLA, and will instantly energize the Wildcats with his athleticism. He has a lot of bounce and has constantly been compared to Andrew Wiggins. While he is not quite the athlete Wiggins is, he certainly has a better work ethic. Murphy has a very solid mid range game, but his 3 point shot needs work to become a threat at the next level. He is a very good dunker and won the McDonald's All-American dunk contest. He plays solid defense thanks to his quickness and is a very capable on ball defender. His ball handling could use some work, but can take people off the drive pretty well. He will be a fun one to watch this year at Kentucky.

NBA Comparison: Less athletic Andrew Wiggins

#10 Tyler McCaskill

Position: Small Forward

School: Kansas State

Height: 6'8

Weight: 208

Profile: McCaskill is a versatile player who could play shooting guard, small forward, or a small ball 4 for an NBA team. He has a very lanky frame and does not have much strength or quickness to his game, but he has a very smooth 3 point shot which will be coveted in the NBA. He does not create his own shot well and is more of a spot up shooter. He has a solid post game when he has smaller defenders matched up on him. He can be a solid defender at the next level with his length, and could potentially defend multiple positions. What he lacks in athleticism, he makes up for in good defensive positioning. He will be a solid defender in Bruce Weber's scheme this year.

NBA Comparison: Otto Porter

Top 10 Returning Players this Year

#1 Ja’Ron Becker

Position: Small Forward

School: Wake Forest

Class: Junior

Height: 6’8

Weight: 230

Profile: Becker returns for his junior year after he likely would have been a top 10 pick in last years draft. Becker is a very sound athlete who does a good job of getting to the rim by cutting back door. He knows what to do when he gets to the rim and he uses his size to finish in the lane. His best attribute is his defense, and he is arguably the best defender in the nation. Becker has a good mid range and you need to respect it, but he definitely needs to work on his 3 point shot. He shoots it frequently, and is a hard worker, so there is no doubt he has been working on it all off season. Ja’Ron does not need the basketball in his hands to be effective on offense. He is an efficient passer and will always make the simple play to set a teammate up. He could defend multiple positions with ease.

NBA Comparison: Jimmy Butler

#2 Quintevin Cherry

Position: SG/SF

School: Ole Miss

Class: Sophomore

Height: 6’7

Weight: 206

Profile: Quintevin Cherry is the highest rated recruit from last year who decided to come back for their sophomore year. He was the #13 rated recruit, and he looks to build on a strong freshman campaign in which he averaged 15.3 PPG. Scouts are looking to see how he will handle being the #1 scoring option on his team this season. He is a very aggressive scorer and will pull up from anywhere on the floor. Cherry shows a lot of promise as an off the dribble scorer, as well as being a solid slasher. He is a willing defender, but not outstanding by any means, and he pulls in a fair share of rebounds. At times, he can get dependent on his 3 point shot, so you would like to see him mix it up a bit more. He has a chance to end up in the top 10 if this season goes well for him.

NBA Comparison: Taller Buddy Heild

#3 Trevor Petrie

Position: Point Guard

School: Virginia

Class: Junior

Height: 6’0

Weight: 198

Profile: Last year as a sophomore, Trevor Petrie was a snub from the NCAA all-defensive team, but he was rewarded with the ACC DPOY. He makes heads up plays and looks for his teammates first. Petrie possesses good quickness and agility, and he uses those qualities to play excellent defense. He is a good hustler, and will provide your team with good energy and leadership. He is a bit small to play PG in the NBA, both in his weight and height, and it can make it hard for him to finish while in the lane. He could develop a 3 point shot and turn

into a solid 3 and D player, but it is still in the works. Virginia will have one of the better defenses in the nation as usual, and Trevor Petrie is a huge reason why.

NBA Comparison: Patrick Beverly

#4 Junior Higgins

Position: Guard

School: UCONN

Class: Senior

Height: 6'4

Weight: 217

Profile: Junior Higgins is a former top 100 recruit who has perfected his craft over 3 years at UCONN, and he looks to build on a strong junior year. A crafty scorer possessing a high quality outside jump shot, Higgins shot 40% from deep as a junior. He has shown the ability to shoot both off the dribble, and as a spot up shooter and he has consistently shown his capability to extend his range out past the NBA line as well. His long range shooting will certainly translate to the current NBA landscape. His freshman and sophomore year he played at the PG position, while he transitioned over to SG as a junior and the move was positive. He could play either position in the NBA. Junior is also well adept at running the pick, and roll and is excellent at throwing lobes in pick and roll situations. He likely won't be asked to carry the scoring load in the NBA, so he should have more energy for the defensive side of the court. He comes up with a decent amount of steals and is always well positioned on the court. At times, he has been inconsistent on the floor, and he does not have much upside due to his age.

NBA Comparison: Devonte' Graham

#5 Paxton Smith

Position: Shooting Guard

School: Washington

Class: Sophomore

Height: 6'6

Weight: 211

Profile: Paxton Smith is back for his sophomore year after a surprising run to the Final 4 last year. He was absolutely incredible during the run for the Huskies, and he gets the #1 player in the nation, Zyheir Moss as his backcourt running mate this season. It's pretty obvious what Paxton offers as a prospect, as he's one of the best shot-creators in the country, despite being only 19 years old. His combination of strength, aggressiveness and scoring instincts are hard to find at this level, and should translate to the NBA level effectively when you consider his terrific footwork, body control, and hesitation moves. He does an excellent job pushing the ball up the floor in transition, and can create and finish with either hand almost equally as well. Paxton is an absolute bulldozer slashing his way through the paint and creating contact at the rim. While not an incredible leaper, Smith knows how to get to the free throw line. He struggles shooting from outside, and his mid range needs improvement, but he will progress with more practice. His go to move is the step back in the mid range. He needs to focus on his passing and making the easy play this year.

NBA Comparison: Tyreke Evans

#6 Dalvin Tucker

Position: Small Forward

School: St. Johns

Class: Junior

Height: 6'8

Weight: 229

Profile: Dalvin Tucker took a major leap forward from his freshman year to his sophomore year, and if he takes that big of a leap forward again he could end up as a top 10 pick. Dalvin Tucker is your ultimate "Glue Guy", and his strongest asset is his ability to contribute across the board. He has a substantial wingspan with a strong frame, and is not scared to bang with bigger bodies down low. His jump shot could use work, but he is a good looking shooter when his feet are set and he catches/releases in rhythm. Dalvin can stretch the floor with NBA 3-point range at times, but again, it needs work. His vision, passing and ability to facilitate out of the post is another strong weapon of his. He needs to work on his dribbling as well. His biggest area of concern is that he is not great at any one area.

NBA Comparison: Draymond Green

#7 PJ Brogdon

Position: Power Forward

School: Cincinnati

Class: Sophomore

Height: 6'10

Weight: 241

Profile: PJ Brogdon looks to take a step forward after a solid, but underwhelming freshman campaign. Scouts have mixed opinions on Brogdon's NBA position as he may be a better player early on in his career at power forward but has the tools to be a solid center. His position will depend on the team that selects him. In terms of physical skills he has great mobility. He is capable of consistently beating his man down the court and runs the floor well for a big, but scouts would not describe him as athletic. He has long arms and excellent timing for blocking shots which is one of his best attributes. He is a great rebounder, and will almost certainly average a double double this season. His footwork on post moves is constantly improving, and it would not be crazy to see him become a great low post threat. He is still a bit raw on and could take some time to develop, but he could be a very solid player in the NBA.

NBA Comparison: Tim Duncan lite (very lite)

#8 Brock Landesberg

Position: Center

School: Ole Miss

Class: Sophomore

Height: 7'0

Weight: 265

Profile: Brock Landesberg and Quintevin Cherry look to be one of the best inside out combos in the NCAA this season. Landesberg has added 30 pound of muscle during the offseason, as he is up to 265 this season after playing all of last year around 235. It will bode well for him as an interior big as he is not the best athlete in the world. He has a reliable hook shot with his right hand plus he has good instinct for the put back. His jump shot shows solid touch, giving him nice potential to develop further offensively, but it is still a project. He has a large wingspan and it allows him to put a lot of pressure on defenders.

He works really well in pick and roll situations. Landesberg is really limited to scoring in the paint, and his leaping ability leaves a lot to be desired. While he backs opponents down very easily at this level, he does not have a go to post move at this point.

NBA Comparison: Bulkier/less athletic Rudy Gobert

#9 Mecole Caffey

Position: Small Forward

School: Clemson

Class: Senior

Height: 6'6

Weight: 211

Profile: Mecole Caffey has led Clemson in scoring the past 2 years, and he looks to continue that trend as a senior as well. He has good speed and can finish plays above the rim when he has a head of steam, but doesn't have the type of elite leaping ability and quickness that would put him on par with the average NBA wing. He does not create his own shot well off the dribble, but he is a very solid spot up shooter. He has a very good floater while he is in the lane to make up for his average athleticism. He has a very high basketball IQ, and knows his shortcomings and has developed skills to work around them. Caffey plays with plenty of intensity on the defensive end, and is one of the better defenders in the ACC.

NBA Comparison: Taller Rodney McGruder

#10 RJ Patton

Position: Point Guard

School: Kansas

Class: Senior

Height: 6'3

Weight: 194

Profile: RJ Patton has been a solid player at the University of Kansas over 4 years. He looks to step up and shoulder the scoring load this season after averaging double digits as a sophomore and junior. Patton could be a better passer at the point guard position. He is a solid athlete, and gets into the lane very easily. He absolutely loves playing iso ball, and he does a pretty solid job at it. He is more of a slasher than a shooter. RJ Patton has a very solid spin jumper he loves to go to at the elbow. Patton is not as good of a defender as he appears, but he does block a decent amount of shots at the guard position. He could be a solid PG off the bench for an NBA team who is looking for a scoring spark from the position.

NBA Comparison: Poor mans Dwayne Wade

Honorable Mention

Donovan Sheppard a 6'8 SF from Oklahoma

Stefan King a 6'5 sophomore SG from Purdue

Jaxon Bosh a 6'4 sophomore SG from UCLA

Tanner Ginyard a 6'2 junior PG from Butler

Brooks Buechler a 6'2 sophomore PG from Michigan State

All of them are former 5 star recruits who showed a lot of promise last year, and will certainly elevate draft stock this year.

Preseason Updates

Fight for #1 Pick

This is a great class to end up with a pick in the top 3 as there are 3 elite prospects who could all be selected with the #1 pick. Zhyeir Moss, the 6'6 PG of Washington looks to be a mismatch at the PG position. He is a fantastic dribbler for his size, and he has insane vision at the position. Braylon Tate, the 6'6 SG who is committed to Duke is one of the best pure scorers we have ever seen. He is an incredible slasher, and his mid range could play in the NBA right now. If he gets his 3 point shot anywhere close to his mid-range the rest of the league better watch out. Finally there is the lanky 6'8 SF LaDreyous Jones of Oklahoma State. After reclassifying and skipping his senior year of high school, he immediately shot up to the #3 player in the recruiting class despite being a year younger than all the other prospects. He offers plenty of upside, and could even find himself as the #1 pick.

Elite class of Shooting Guards

This class of shooting guards is arguably the best we have ever seen. Assuming all of them enter the draft, there are 8 shooting guards who could hear their name in the top 15 of the draft. This year we will be power ranking the SG class based on their college performance, not necessarily where they will end up being selected in the draft.

#1 Junior Higgins-6'4-UConn-Higgins is the best returning SG to the NCAA this season. He is a senior and offers plenty of upside based on his incredible deep range shooting. He has transitioned from PG to SG very smoothly.

#2 Quintevin Cherry-6'7-Ole Miss-Very similar game to Buddy Heild. The sophomore could play either SG or SF at the next level. Scores from all over the floor. Very good dribbler for his height.

#3 Paxton Smith-6'6-Washington-Zyheir Moss has gotten plenty of publicity, but Paxton Smith is fresh off leading Washington to the Final 4 as a 6 seed in last year's tournament. Just a sophomore, he has plenty of room to improve, which is scary because he is already pretty good.

#4 Stefan King-6'5-Purdue-One of the best athletes in the nation. King threw down some incredible dunks last season at Purdue. The sophomore needs to work on his shot this year, but his athleticism will see him drafted early.

#5 Jaxon Bosh-6'4-UCLA-Jaxon Bosh was one of the more impressive freshman SGs last year at UCLA. Bosh has plus athleticism and a solid 3 point shot.

#6 Braylon Tate-6'6-Duke-Without playing a college basketball game, we could not put Braylon Tate higher than this, but he will climb up these ranks very shortly.

#7 Bakari Jackson-6'6-Florida State-Same situation as Tate. Could not put a freshman higher than any of the standouts returning to college. Jackson is a freak athlete and has a killer mid range game.

#8 Kenny Maynor-6'7-Kansas State-Kenny Maynor was the #11 recruit in the nation this past season and he is one of the most all around solid players in the class. He is a very solid shooter and does not look to have a weak spot in his game.

Strength of the Big 12

This season there is no denying that the Big 12 is the best conference in all of basketball. They have 7 teams in the top 25, including 3 in the top 5. We will be tracking the Big 12 this season and the race for a Big 12 title. Here is where they are currently ranked in the coaches poll.

#1 Baylor-Baylor returns 6'10 PF Jakaree Gadsen and they get to add the #8 recruit in the nation, 7'1 C, Nadab Joseph. Baylor's defense could very well be the best in the nation with those 2 manning the paint.

#2 Kansas-Kansas has RJ Patton at the PG position to provide them with plenty of experience, as well as 7'3 freshman C, Chandler Walton. This could be the best inside out duo in the nation.

#5 Oklahoma State-Temple Brown, the 7'1 senior for Oklahoma State provides solid inside scoring and defense inside, while freshman LaDreyous Jones could be the best player in the nation by years end.

#8 Iowa State-Iowa State does not have any standouts like the 3 teams above, but they play very sound basketball and do not have a weakness 1-5. Senior PG Kevin Lyles is very underrated, as is junior SG Davion Evans, who is a great shooter.

#9 Kansas State-One of the better recruiting classes in the nation that features SF Tyler McCaskill and SG Kenny Maynor. This is the biggest wildcard team in the Big 12 depending on how those 2 adjust to the college game.

#12 Texas Tech-Between 6'8 sophomore Chris Johnson, and 7'2 senior Howie Alexander, this might be one of the best defensive teams in the nation behind Baylor and Virginia.

#21 Oklahoma-Oklahoma is a good team, but they will go as far as sophomore SF Donovan Sheppard will take them. He is 6'8 and can hit the 3, and is capable of shutting down a team's best player on any given night.

Following the 7 footers

This year there appears to be 7 players who are 7 feet or taller that could be picked in the draft, which would be the most ever. While there is not as much top end tall talent as there was in the 2018 NBA draft, there are plenty of players who could carve out a solid role in the league. The players below are listed by height.

Chandler Walton-7'3-Kansas-Chandler Walton has the most potential out of the 7 footers in this class. He is a super raw freshman who can hit from outside. Runs the floor well and plays good defense.

Howie Alexander-7'2-Texas Tech-Alexander is showing up late in the 2nd round of mock drafts. The senior plays elite defense for Texas Tech, but does not offer much on the offensive side of the ball.

Nadab Joseph-7'1-Baylor-Phenomenal shot blocker. Lanky and long defender. Has shown flashes on the offensive end, but nothing consistent. Probably the best athlete among the centers in this draft class.

Temple Brown-7'1-Oklahoma State-Solid post game for a big but does not extend outside of the paint. Good shot blocker, and very strong. Doesn't run the floor well.

Brock Landesberg-7'0-Ole Miss-Brock looks like he is the most ready for the NBA after a solid freshman campaign. He has added 30 pounds of muscle and is up to 265. He has an advanced low post game, but it doesn't extend out of the paint yet. Runs floor well for his size.

Gabe Early-7'0-North Carolina-The #15 recruit in the nation this past season. The freshman is very raw on both sides of the ball, but projects as an all around center. Has shown he can score in the mid range.

Jeryl Bledsoe-7'0-Duke-Bledsoe has struggled to get on the floor for Duke as a freshman and sophomore, but finally cracked the starting lineup as a junior. He can really improve his draft stock this year with a strong season.

General Scouting Updates

This year's class does not look to have any international players in the 1st round of the draft. The SG class is very strong and there are even a couple sleepers outside of the top 8 that could make an impact. This is a weak class for power forwards, but with a little time and development, there could be a couple of players out of the class that eventually make an impact. A strong class, but if you can afford to move picks in this class and acquire 2022 draft picks, do so as it will be one for the ages. More on that in a future post.

Maui Invitation pictures

UConn vs Washington

Oklahoma State vs Kentucky

Non-conference Updates

Fight for #1 Pick

The fight for the number 1 pick remains an exciting one, as all 3 potential players had stellar performances in the non conference. PG Zyheir Moss is currently averaging 17 points and 7 assists a game while leading Washington to a 11-2 record so far this season. He had a 18 point, 10 rebound, 11 assist triple double in a 82-78 win against Gonzaga. SG Braylon Tate has proven that he can score with the best of them. He is currently averaging 26 points a game and he has done it in a variety of ways. He is shooting a respectable 35% from behind the 3 point line, but he has really excelled for Duke this year. His best performance came when he had a 38 point game against South Dakota. Finally, we have SF LaDreyous Jones who has proven he can score all over the floor. He is currently averaging 21 points, 8 rebounds, and 2 blocks a game. He is shooting a lights out 43% from behind the 3 point line currently, and he has proven to be a mismatch with his outside shooting and height down low.

Elite class of Shooting Guards

This class of shooting guards is arguably the best we have ever seen. Assuming all of them enter the draft, there are 8 shooting guards who could hear their name in the top 15 of the draft. This year we will be power ranking the SG class based on their college performance, not necessarily where they will end up being selected in the draft.

#1 Braylon Tate-6'6-Duke-It did not take long for Tate to prove he was the best SG in this class. He is leading the power 5 conferences in scoring.

#2 Quintevin Cherry-6'7-Ole Miss-Cherry has been doing a much better job of getting to the rim this year and getting fouled, as he is averaging 8 free throws a game. He has Ole Miss positioned to do some damage in the SEC as they begin tournament play.

#3 Junior Higgins-6'4-UCONN-Higgins and UCONN started the season off on the wrong foot by falling to 2-3, but have won 8 straight since. Higgins 3 point % is down from a year ago, but he has been distributing the ball well from the SG position as he is averaging 5 assists a game.

#4 Paxton Smith-6'6-Washington-Paxton Smith has been a solid force for Washington all season, but he is being overshadowed by Zyheir Moss. Smith is currently averaging 15 points per game.

#5 Jaxon Bosh-6'4-UCLA-Bosh has continued to impress this season with his solid athleticism. UCLA is a well rounded team and Bosh is their leading scorer at 19 points per game.

#6 Bakari Jackson-6'6-Florida State-Bakari Jackson started off slow, but has since turned it around. He is averaging 18 points per game and is the best player on a lackluster Florida State team.

#7 Kenny Maynor-6'7-Kansas State-Kanny Maynor has proved to be a "do it all" player for the Wildcats this season as he is averaging 14 points, 7 rebounds, 4 assists a game. Just as scouts thought, he has been very solid, but does not wow. Very advanced game for a freshman though.

#8 Stefan King-6'5-Purdue-King has thrown down some incredible dunks this season just as we expected, but the rest of his game did not take a step forward as we were hoping it

would. Purdue is 10-3 as they head into conference play, and King is averaging 16 points per game.

Strength of the Big 12

The Big 12 proved its strength in the non conference portion of their schedule. This is the best the conference will ever look, as they will all begin to beat each other up in conference play.

#1 Baylor (13-0)-Baylor remains at the top of the polls behind stellar play from Nadab Joseph and Jakaree Gadsen. Those 2 have been absolute forces on the inside and have helped Baylor have the best defense in the nation. Junior SF Eric Forest is the leading scorer for the Bears.

#2 Kansas (13-0)-KU and RJ Patton have been a dominant force all season and Patton is averaging 17 points 6.5 assists. He looks like the next great point guard under Bill Self. 7'3 Center Chandler Walton has been very solid and is averaging 13 points, 9 rebounds. KU appears to be limiting his minutes to help manage his workload.

#4 Oklahoma State (12-1)-Temple Brown and LaDreyous Jones have been everything we expected they would be coming into the season, but the real surprise has been freshman PG, Chet Perry. Perry is running the offense very well for the Cowboys and is averaging 6 assists a game while limiting his turnovers to just 1 a game.

#7 Oklahoma (13-0)-Donovan Sheppard has been lights out to start the season, and he currently leads the Big 12 in 3 pointers made. Freshman SF Cameron LaVert has been able to provide a solid scoring option for the Sooners off the bench as he is averaging 12 points a game.

#9 Iowa State (11-2)-Iowa State has been sound this season and they are 1st in the least amount of turnovers all season. They lost two games to top 10 teams against Ole Miss and Michigan State.

#13 Kansas State (11-2)-Kansas State lost their first game of the season to UC Irvine, followed up with another loss to UMKC and they fell to #25 in the polls, but they have rattled off 11 straight wins and are back inside the top 15.

#15 Texas Tech(11-2) -Texas Tech has not disappointed with their defense this season. Opponents are shooting 36% from the field against them and only 24% from behind the arc.

Following the 7 footers

This year there appears to be 7 players who are 7 feet or taller that could be picked in the draft, which would be the most ever. While there is not as much top end tall talent as there was in the 2018 NBA draft, there are plenty of players who could carve out a solid role in the league. The players below are listed by height.

Chandler Walton-7'3-Kansas-While Walton has been an important part of the Jayhawks success, Coach Bill Self feels like there's another level to his game. He has come off the bench as of late, and he might be in Bill Self's dog house.

Howie Alexander-7'2-Texas Tech-Alexander is currently averaging 9 points a game, mainly off rebounds and put backs. He's averaging 3.1 blocks a game manning the middle of the Texas Tech defense.

Nadab Joseph-7'1-Baylor-Joseph is leading the nation in blocks per game at 3.5. He is so long and has a knack for being in the right place at the right time.

Temple Brown-7'1-Oklahoma State-His offensive production is up this year as he is averaging 16 points and 10 rebounds a game.

Brock Landesberg-7'0-Ole Miss-Landesberg is the best offensive center in the nation right now. The added muscle this off season has improved his inside game even more, and he has been stretching his shot out to the free throw line with ease.

Gabe Early-7'0-North Carolina-Gabe Early was off to a hot start scoring 23, 18, and 21 points in his first 3 games, but an ankle injury has had him sidelined. He should be back in the next couple of weeks.

Jeryl Bledsoe-7'0-Duke-Jeryl has been a rebound machine when in the game for Duke, but sophomore Josh Kirkland has cut into his playing time a bit.

High School Scouting Update

To those geographically forlorn and financially restricted NBA franchises, hope is coming. In the wake of the major-market magnetism that unfolded in the NBA's summer of 2019, the brightest beacon for those jilted NBA franchises comes from the 2022 NBA draft.

The ballyhooed "Double Draft" will arrive in 2022 because of a confluence of high-end players from two talented high school classes. This will be the first season when the NBA rule change goes into effect that will pare down the NBA age minimum from 19 to 18. That means all of the country's best one-and-done players from 2021 and prep-to-pro prospects from 2022 will combine for a blockbuster draft that, in theory, will have double the high-end talent.

"I think it's going to be a monumental draft class, potentially a generational class," Rivals.com recruiting analyst Corey Evans said. "The infiltration of the one-and-done class from 2021 and the potential of the straight-to-the-pros group makes it a tsunami of talent, like two draft classes in one."

NBA franchises are already positioning themselves for the chance to cash in on all the talent. The sweetener for the 2022 draft is the allure of expected No. 1 overall pick, PG Jamar Summers. He's a rising high school junior in California at Sierra Canyon who is already considered the country's best NBA prospect, regardless of age. Expect Summers to become the face of the newest prep-to-pro age, just like Kevin Garnett was a generation ago. Along with Summers, there are 3-4 other high school juniors who will likely turn pro. Dave Turner Jr. a lightning quick SG from Georgia, SF Isiah Wolters from Texas. who is a lanky 6'9 mismatch inside or out, and 7'0 C Tylon Hubbard of Alabama. Hubbard has shown the ability to shoot from range.

The potential one and dones include SG Gianni Gamble, a scoring force who is committed to Duke, Justin Drexler the 6'9 Gonzaga committ who is so versatile he can play any position 1-5, and Eric Machado who is a PF with an advanced low post game who is committed to Xavier.

Pictures

Duke vs UNC

Cincinnati vs Xavier

Conference play Updates

Fight for #1 Pick

All 3 top prospects continue to jockey for position for the top pick in the draft. LaDreyous Jones is looking like the player who has taken the lead, as he has been on fire as OSU is sitting at 6-2 in a loaded Big 12 conference, and he is having his way with anyone who tried to guard him. Zyheir Moss has continued his consistent play as he has Washington sitting at 7-1 in Pac-12 play. Braylon Tate has struggled a bit as we enter conference play, but he is still averaging 19 points a game during conference play.

Elite class of Shooting Guards

This class of shooting guards is arguably the best we have ever seen. Assuming all of them enter the draft, there are 8 shooting guards who could hear their name in the top 15 of the draft. This year we will be power ranking the SG class based on their college performance, not necessarily where they will end up being selected in the draft.

#1 Junior Higgins-6'4-UConn-Higgins and UConn have continued their tear since their rocky start. He is now averaging close to 24 points per game while dishing out 5 assists a game. If he continues this, he has a shot at the Wooden Award.

#2 Quintevin Cherry-6'7-Ole Miss-Cherry has been one of the best players in the country this season. He continues to get to the line, and looks like a sure thing in the lottery, or even the top 10. Ole Miss will be one of the better teams come March.

#3 Braylon Tate-6'6-Duke-As mentioned above, Tate has fallen off a bit as the competition has gotten tougher, but he is still a lock for the top 3.

#4 Bakari Jackson-6'6-Florida State-Jackson has continued his great play but is not getting much help from any other Florida State player. He has been getting to the rim at will but really needs to work on his jump shot. He has a high field goal percentage due to not forcing his below average jump shot. He is averaging 21 points per game.

#5 Jaxon Bosh-6'4-UCLA-UCLA is ranked in the top 10 and Jaxon Bosh is a major reason why. He is averaging 24 points a game in conference play.

#6 Paxton Smith-6'6-Washington-As Zyheir Moss has added a bit more scoring, Smith's numbers have fallen off a bit. It looks like he and Moss have not meshed as well as you would have expected.

#7 Kenny Maynor-6'7-Kansas State-Since conference play has started he has become the Wildcats go to scorer. He is shooting 41% from behind the arc in conference play.

#8 Stefan King-6'5-Purdue-King has been a solid part of the Purdue team, but the emergence of sophomore PG Jamon Tiggs has hurt Kings production.

Strength of the Big 12

The Big 12 proved its strength in the non conference portion of their schedule. This is the best the conference will ever look, as they will all begin to beat each other up in conference play. We are now halfway through conference play and their conference win and loss total and ranking is shown.

#1 Baylor (8-0)-Baylor has continued to roll and is now sitting at 21-0. They will matchup with Texas Tech in a battle of Big 12 unbeaten for the top spot in the Big 12. This might be a "first to 50" type of game with these two defenses.

#1 Texas Tech(8-0) -While it was expected Texas Tech would have a good team, no one expected them to be sitting at 8-0 8 games into the Big 12 schedule. Sophomore PF Chris Johnson has been great on both sides of the ball for Tech.

#3 Kansas (6-2)-KU has dominated the bottom half of the Big 12, but lost at home to both Texas Tech and Baylor. They play OSU this week in what could be a deciding factor in the Big 12 race.

#3 Oklahoma State (6-2)-Oklahoma States only losses have been to both Baylor and Texas Tech. LaDreyous Jones is one of, if not the best player in the country. Chet Perry has been one of the bigger surprises this season as the freshman PG is leading the conference in assists since conference play has begun.

#5 Oklahoma (5-3)-Donovan Sheppard has cooled off a bit, but OU is still a tough matchup every game. In their 3 losses they have lost by a combined 7 points.

#6 Iowa State (4-4)-Iowa State struggled a bit against the top half of the Big 12. They are winning the games they should win against the bottom feeders, but are not competing against the top of the conference.

#6 Kansas State (4-4)-The duo of Tyler McCaskill and Kenny Maynor has been fun, but their inexperience shows at time as they struggle in close games.

Following the 7 footers

This year there appears to be 7 players who are 7 feet or taller that could be picked in the draft, which would be the most ever. While there is not as much top end tall talent as there was in the 2018 NBA draft, there are plenty of players who could carve out a solid role in the league. The players below are listed by height.

Chandler Walton-7'3-Kansas-Waltons playing time has diminished to the point that he is coming off the bench now. He is shooting 39% from 3, but Bill Self is not satisfied with him as a big man. He constantly describes Walton as "soft".

Howie Alexander-7'2-Texas Tech-Alexander is a major reason Texas Tech is sitting at 8-0 in Big 12 play. His defense is some of the best in the nation.

Nadab Joseph-7'1-Baylor-Not much has changed with Joseph. Still doing what he does best, block shots and finish at the rim.

Temple Brown-7'1-Oklahoma State-He, LaDreyous Jones, and Chet Perry have been a very solid big 3 for the Cowboys. Brown is a major reason why the cowboys crash the offensive glass so well.

Brock Landesberg-7'0-Ole Miss-Landesberg and Ole Miss could end up running away with the SEC. Landesberg is averaging 24 points and 11 rebounds a game and he and Quintevin Cherry is the best 1-2 punch in the nation.

Gabe Early-7'0-North Carolina-Early is still out with an ankle injury, but will be able to play next game against Clemson.

Jeryl Bledsoe-7'0-Duke-Jeryl is a big body but just depth at this point. He looks like a project for an NBA team at this point, but the potential is there for the former 5 star recruit.

Top 25 Poll Update

1. Baylor
2. Ole Miss
3. Kansas

4. UCONN
5. St. Johns
6. Wake Forest
7. Villanova
8. Texas Tech
9. Oklahoma State
10. UCLA
11. North Carolina
12. Cincinnati
13. Duke
14. Virginia
15. Michigan State
16. Washington
17. Kentucky
18. Oklahoma
19. Iowa State
20. Wisconsin
21. Purdue
22. Kansas State
23. Houston
24. Arizona
25. Clemson

Baylor stays atop the top 25 as they remain undefeated, but 1 loss Ole Miss is right on their tail behind Quintevin Cherry and Brock Landesberg. UCONN is on fire behind Wooden Award favorite PG Junior Higgins. The surprises in the top 10 are St. Johns who are led by Jr. SF Dalvin Tucker, and Wake Forest who is led by Jr. SF Ja'Ron Becker. Both of them are carrying their teams and to this point, it is working. Cincinnati and PJ Brogdon have been solid all year and have hovered right around this range. Michigan State has been up and down, but PG Brooks Buechler appears to have found a rhythm. Washington has all the fire power in the world, but Zyheir Moss and Paxton Smith have not been able to get in sync. Jr. PG David Wiley has Houston inside the top 25. Wiley is one of the better players in the nation but does not get the attention he deserves.

Pictures

Baylor vs Texas Tech

Tech wins

End of regular season update

Fight for #1 Pick

At this point we would be shocked if LaDreyous Jones did not end up the number 1 pick in the upcoming draft. He was lights out for Oklahoma State down the stretch averaging 31 points and 9 rebounds over his last 5 games. Braylon Tate adapted well to the ACC and was named to the ACC 1st team by averaging 25 points a game. Zyheir Moss became more aggressive as the season went on and he finished with averages of 19 points, 7 assists, 7 rebounds, and 2 steals a game for Washington. If we had to place a bet, we would guess the top 3 would go Jones, Tate, and then Moss.

Elite class of Shooting Guards

This class of shooting guards is arguably the best we have ever seen. Assuming all of them enter the draft, there are 8 shooting guards who could hear their name in the top 15 of the draft. This year we will be power ranking the SG class based on their college performance, not necessarily where they will end up being selected in the draft.

#1 Junior Higgins-6'4-UConn-UConn looks like a 1 seed and Junior Higgins looks like a favorite for the Wooden Award. He finishes the year by averaging 24 points and 7 assists a game. He might be more of a PG at the next level.

#2 Quintevin Cherry-6'7-Ole Miss-Another candidate for the Wooden Award, Quintevin Cherry looks like the real deal at Ole Miss. We would be shocked if they did not end up a 1 seed as well. Cherry has proved he can score at all 3 levels.

#3 Braylon Tate-6'6-Duke-Tate has as much potential as anybody in this draft. He was able to finish the season on a high note, but could really make a name for himself in the NCAA tournament.

#4 Paxton Smith-6'6-Washington-He and Zyheir Moss have begun to play much better together and as a result, Smith ended the season by scoring 20 points in 6 straight games.

#5 Bakari Jackson-6'6-Florida State-Jackson and Florida State will likely sneak into the NCAA tournament as a double digit seed. Jackson was able to keep Florida State afloat this season, but they would be in the CBI without him this year.

#6 Kenny Maynor-6'7-Kansas State-Kenny Maynor would finish the year leading the Wildcats in points, rebounds, and steals.

#7 Stefan King-6'5-Purdue-King and Jamon Tiggs have finally figured out how to play well together, but King does not belong any higher than this on the SG list. He has plenty of untapped potential.

#8 Jaxon Bosh-6'4-UCLA-A quad injury to Bosh has left him on the sidelines, and he is a 50/50 shot to play in the opening round of the NCAA tournament.

Strength of the Big 12

The Big 12 proved its strength in the non conference portion of their schedule. This is the best the conference will ever look, as they will all begin to beat each other up in conference play. We are now finished with conference play and their conference win and loss total and ranking is shown.

#1 Oklahoma State (16-2)-Oklahoma State finished the season on a 10 game win streak to win the Big-12. SF LaDreyous Jones was named Big 12 POY, and Temple Brown was named to the Big 12 second team. Chet Perry was 1st team all freshman and 3rd team Big 12.

#2 Texas Tech(15-3)-After starting the year 9-0 in Big 12 play and looked ready to win the conference, but 2 straight losses was all Oklahoma State needed to pull even with them.

#3 Baylor (14-4)-After starting 8-0 in the conference, Baylor would finish the season 6-4 and limp to the finish line. While they finished the season with an impressive record, they could be on upset alert if a team catches fire in the NCAA tournament.

#4 Kansas (13-5)-An up and down season for KU as they were as high as #2 in the polls, and then managed to have a 4 game losing streak at one point. This team has as much firepower as any team in the country, and Bill Self looks to have lit a fire under Chandler Walton who averaged 23 points and 13 rebounds during the Big 12 tournament. KU looks to have caught it's stride as we head into March Madness after a Big 12 tournament championship.

#5 Kansas State (12-6)-K-State finished the season by winning 8 of its final 9, but they had dug themselves too deep of a hole to get out. They are battle tested and ready to make some noise in March.

#6 Iowa State (9-9)-Iowa State was 8-0 against the bottom half of the Big 12, but just 1-9 against the top 5. They were in every game, but not able to get over the hump.

#7 Oklahoma (8-10)-The wheels fell off of Oklahoma as the season progressed. Oklahoma had 3 key injuries and were not able to get enough pieces around Donovan Sheppard to give him any help. They are on the bubble heading into March.

Following the 7 footers

This year there appears to be 7 players who are 7 feet or taller that could be picked in the draft, which would be the most ever. While there is not as much top end tall talent as there was in the 2018 NBA draft, there are plenty of players who could carve out a solid role in the league. The players below are listed by height.

Chandler Walton-7'3-Kansas-Walton finally got going in the Big-12 tournament. This is what scouts and fans have been expecting to see from Walton all season long.

Howie Alexander-7'2-Texas Tech-Walton and Texas Tech overachieved all season long. Alexander might not have a superstar future in the NBA, but he could carve out a defensive role in the league.

Nadab Joseph-7'1-Baylor-Even when Baylor struggled down the stretch, Nadab Joseph did not. He should hear his name called in the lottery of this years draft.

Temple Brown-7'1-Oklahoma State-Temple Brown finished the season strong by posting a double double in 7 straight games to close out the year.

Brock Landesberg-7'0-Ole Miss-Landesberg and Ole Miss will likely be the #1 overall seed in the tournament. Landesberg will be tough for any team to defend.

Gabe Early-7'0-North Carolina-Early came back but was not able to live up to expectation as the ankle injury limited him the remainder of the season. He averaged 12 points and 8 rebounds after the injury.

Jeryl Bledsoe-7'0-Duke-While Bledsoe has seen his minutes diminish all season, he did not get discouraged. He will provide solid veteran leadership in the tournament.

West Region Preview

#1 Villanova: Villanova has quietly stayed inside the top 10 all season thanks to their senior leader, Beau Love. Beau is a wing who is a very crafty scorer. Sophomore Alexi Howell is a 6'11 center who can stretch the floor, and junior Courtland Drake, who is another center playing power forward for the Wildcats, is a gritty rebounder. They are not thrilled about their region location though.

#2 Kansas: RJ Patton is one of the best PGs in the country and capable of putting this team on his back. Along with Patton is future lottery pick Chandler Walton who finally is living up to his potential. Sophomore wing, Jasper Westerman is the wildcard for this team. If he can shoot well, they can make a serious run.

#3 Wake Forest: Ja'Ron Becker is a Wooden Award finalist for a reason. He alone will make Wake Forest a tough matchup. If Becker gets into foul trouble, Wake Forest could be in trouble.

#4 North Carolina: North Carolina is headlined by 3 future pros on their team with senior SF Jordan Madison, junior PF Daveion Wilson, and freshman C Gabe Early. Madison and Wilson are showing up in the 2nd round of mocks, and Early was a lottery pick before injuring his ankle early in the season.

#5 Purdue: Purdue is a 2 headed monster with athletic sophomore SG Stefan King, and sophomore PG, Jamon Tiggs. Despite Tiggs standing at just 5'9, he is one of the best PGs in the nation. He was 2nd Team Big-10 this past year, and he and King have been playing very well together as of late.

#6 Nevada: Senior SG JJ Royal might be the best 3 point shooter in the nation. He hit 43% of his 3 point shots this past year, while shooting over 10 a game. Sophomore PF Devin Randle is an athletic defender who impacts games on both ends of the floor.

#7 Arizona State: ASU is anchored by freshman PF Darius Van Gundy. He can hit low post, high post, and runs the offense well through him despite him just being a freshman.

#8 Richmond: Freshman PF Dakara Thunder is the best player on the Richmond squad. He was an athletic 6'6 small forward when he committed and now he is 6'8 playing the power forward position. He has thrown down some of the best dunks we have seen all year.

#9 Michigan: The Wolverines and sophomore PG Shondarius Myers have been inconsistent all year. They are capable of making an Elite 8 run, or losing by 30 in round 1.

#10 Iowa State: Iowa State spent the season beating the teams they were supposed to beat, and losing to teams clearly better than them. Senior PG Kevin Lyles is very underrated, as is junior SG Davion Evans, who is a great shooter.

#11 BYU: Sophomore PG, Davion Pearson is a great distributor of the basketball, but he is also very turnover prone. He needs to be on his A game for BYU to have a chance.

#12 Marshall: Marshall is a very up and down team. They have an 8 game win streak this season as well as a 5 game losing streak.

#13: Leigh: One of the better mid majors, but they shouldn't make it past UNC.

#14 Northern Illinois: They are a senior heavy team who could potentially take advantage of Wake Forest if Ja'ron Becker got hurt or got into foul trouble.

#15 UC Irvine: A very middle of the road team who is only in the tournament because they won their conference tournament. They do have an upset win over Kansas State this season.

#16 Liberty: Nothing to see here. Move along.

Lundardi's Analysis

Final 4 Pick: Kansas

5 Best Players: Ja'Ron Becker (Wake Forest), RJ Patton (Kansas), Beau Love (Villanova), Darius Van Gundy (Arizona State), Jamon Tiggs (Purdue)

Overseeded: UNC

Under-seeded: Arizona State

If they catch fire they can make a run: Nevada or Richmond

On Upset Alert: Wake Forest

Midwest Region Preview

#1 Baylor: A top 5 defensive team led by freshman Nadab Joseph and Senior Jakaree Gadsen. Their main scoring threat is 6'7 junior Eric Forest. He is an athletic wing who drives the ball well. They started the season off 21-0 before losing 5 games in their last 11. Many thought they might of played their way out of a 1 seec, but they still ended up there.

#2 Virginia: This is one of the better teams in the nation, and boy can they defend. PF Jonathan Butler and C Austin Robinson man the paint. While they are solid, they don't compare to junior PG, Trevor Petrie. He is a great passer and the best on ball defender in the country.

#3 Washington: One of the scarier teams in the tournament as they are not lacking star power with PG Zyheir Moss and SG Paxton Smith. They have finally learned to play well together, and they are capable of beating any team in the tournament.

#4 Cincinnati: Sophomore PF PJ Progdon is one of the best post players in the country. He will likely be a lottery pick in this years draft and is capable of putting Cincinnati on his back on their way through the tournament.

#5 Michigan State: Brooks Buechler is one of the best PGs in the nation. His hustle is contagious for the Spartans, and junior wing Teon Waiters looks like one of the better 3 and D players in the nation. He has really made name for himself this season.

#6 Houston: Houston is a 1 man show with junior PG David Wiley. He is a 6'3 PG who can score with the best of them. While he is a capable passer, he is smart with the ball, and the smart thing for him to do is take it to the hoop.

#7 Utah: Utah has overachieved all season and we could see them getting knocked off in the opening round. Devin McAdoo is showing up in the late 2nd round of mock drafts, so they do have some star appeal.

#8 Clemson: Mecole Caffey does everything he can to keep Clemson in games. He will be one of the best players in the region as he is a solid 3 pointer, great defender, great athlete, but he struggles when putting the ball on the floor.

#9 Ohio State: Sophomore PG Dante Shields stepped up for Ohio State this past season as their offense initiator. He will unfortunately draw Mecole Caffey on defense in round one.

#10 SMU: SMU underperformed this season and still managed to avoid a play in game. Junior PF Brandon Lorbeck and freshman C DJ Vanderbilt provide a great 1-2 punch down low, while sophomore SF Ramiir Pleiss is the main scoring threat for the Mustangs.

#11 Oklahoma: This Oklahoma team could do some damage as an 11 seed, but they are limping into the tournament. Donovan Sheppard is good, but the rest of this team is not.

#12 Murray State: Sophomore SF Cameron McKinney is one of the best athletes in the

NCAA. It all just depends if he is having an on or off night shooting.

#13: Wofford: One of the better 3 point shooting teams in the nation.

#14 Coppin State: Washington could beat them by 50.

#15 Delaware: Delaware has an interesting player in freshman SG Malik Bacon. He was committed to Illinois before having his scholarship pulled from every power 5 school for a DUI his senior year of high school. While he is good, he is all they have.

#16 Vermont: Baylor might get upset, but it will not be by Vermont.

Lundardi's Analysis

Final 4 Pick: Washington

5 Best Players: Zyheir Moss (Washington), Mecole Caffey (Clemson), Nadab Joseph (Baylor), Brooks Buechler (Michigan State), David Wiley (Houston)

Overseeded: Baylor

Under-seeded: Michigan State

If they catch fire they can make a run: Oklahoma

On Upset Alert: Utah

South Region Preview

#1 Ole Miss: The number 1 overall seed in the tournament is the favorite in an absolutely loaded South region. Quintevin Cherry, the SEC POY, is one of the best players in the nation, and Brock Landesberg is the best scoring post in the nation. Both of them average over 20 points per game.

#2 Oklahoma State: Oklahoma State likely has the #1 pick in LaDreyous Jones on their team, as well as an emerging playmaker in Chet Perry at PG. Throw in Temple Brown at Center, and you have a big 3 capable of playing with any team in the tournament.

#3 Duke: Duke has Braylon Tate who is capable of dropping 40 points on any given night. Outside of Tate, they have a well rounded team but no one who shines like Tate.

#4 Kentucky: Kentucky lost only 4 SEC games this year, but still stood no chance in their 2 matchups with Ole Miss where they lost by 13 and 18 points. Shaun Murphy has had a solid freshman campaign at the SF position, as has KJ Sampson, the lefty PG. He led the SEC in assists this past season.

#5 Wisconsin: Last season Wisconsin was here as a 9 seed and ended undefeated Indiana's run on a last second shot from PG Nick Cruz. Cruz is back again this year as a senior and provides a gritty component to the Badgers.

#6 LSU: Senior Forward Evan Simmons led the Tigers to a strong finish in the SEC this season. Simmons hit a baseline jump shot to knock off UCLA last season in the tournament.

#7 Butler: Tanner Ginyard led the nation in assists this season as a junior at just over 9 a game. They might lack the fire power of other teams in this region, but they do have a solid scoring option in freshman Jack Skinner off the bench.

#8 Illinois: Sophomore PF Adam Osby is rough around the edges, but has come along way since his freshman year. He is the Illini's best player.

#9 Alabama: Alabama freshman Freddie Kaman has been a nice surprise for the Tide this season. He was a 4 star prospect with a great highlight reel, but failed to string together

consistent play. He is an ankle breaking, flashy passing PG who seems to shine in the spotlight.

#10 Georgia Tech: Sophomore Tyrice Knight has been showing up late 2nd round in mock drafts at the PF position but he could benefit from another year in college. Sophomore SF Dan Schroder has provided very strong defense for the Yellow Jackets.

#11 Florida State: Florida State barely made it in the tournament even though they have one of the nations premier players in Bakari Jackson. Over the last 5 games, Florida State slid him over to the SF position and played sophomore Braijion Ojeyele at the SG position. Ojeyele is a solid shooter and compliments Jackson very well.

#12 UCF: Stedman White and UCF made a Sweet 16 run a year ago and is looking to do it again. White is a very quick PG who can defend well and finish at the rim.

#13: Houston Baptist: Many people are shocked that Houston Baptist is not a 15 or 16 seed. They stand no chance against Kentucky.

#14 Drake: Drake is feeling the loss of their stud in Daymonn Sutton, but they knocked off UNI in their conference championship to secure a bid.

#15 Youngstown State: Youngstown State starts 5 seniors, but that will likely not be enough.

#16 Weber State: Not happening.

Lundardi's Analysis

Final 4 Pick: Ole Miss

5 Best Players: LaDreyous Jones (OSU), Braylon Tate (Duke), Quintevin Cherry (Ole Miss), Brock Landesberg (Ole Miss), Bakari Jackson (Florida State)

Overseeded: Wisconsin

Under-seeded: Kentucky

If they catch fire they can make a run: Florida State

On Upset Alert: LSU

West Region Preview

#1 UCONN: Uconn has arguably the nations best player on their team in Junior Higgins. He can hit from anywhere on the floor. He led the nation in shots attempted this season. If he can lead the Huskies to a Final 4, they might put a statue of him up outside the stadium. The fans absolutely LOVE Junior.

#2 Texas Tech: How far can elite defense carry you? Just ask Texas Tech as they are riding this to a 2 seed. They were picked to finish 6th in the Big 12, and ended up finishing 6th in the nation. While they struggle to score at times, so do their opponents.

#3 UCLA: UCLA boasts one of the best backcourts in the nation with freshman PG Nyvin Nelson, and sophomore SG Jaxon Bosh. If guard play really is key in March, they have as good of a chance as anyone in this region.

#4 St. Johns: St. Johns will go as far as Dalvin Tucker takes them. He is long, athletic, rebounds well, and finishes at the rim with ease. He is improving his 3 point shot, and is a good enough passer at the college level. He is a mismatch at 6'8.

#5 Arizona: Freshman SF Darion Chapman is a lob threat who loves to get out and run, while DeAntoni Cain is an old school big who struggles in this up tempo offense, but man does he make an impact in the paint.

#6 South Carolina: Junior C Rodney Potter and freshman SF Evertt Collins have overachieved a bit this season, but Head Coach Frank Martin has gone to the Final 4 recently with a team similar to this.

#7 Memphis: Freshman PF Ben Mason has been fun to watch this season for the Tigers, but don't expect them to make it out of the first weekend.

#8 Mississippi State: Junior SG Blake Curtis can shoot it with the best of them. Best case scenario is he gets hot and they make a deep run in the tournament. Worst case is an opening round loss to Kansas State and Curtis displays his skills in the 3 point competition at the Final 4.

#9 Kansas State: An inconsistent freshman heavy team. They could be an intriguing matchup with UCONN in round 2, but they need to make it past Mississippi State first. Both Kenny Maynor and Tyler McCaskill should hear their names in the first round of the draft.

#10 Louisville: A senior heavy team who has underachieved all year. Don't expect that to change in March. They do have 5 star freshman PG OJ Wyatt, but he has seen minimal minutes all season despite his talent.

#11 Northern Iowa: UNI ends up here as an at large team after losing to Drake in their conference championship game.

#12 Harvard: This is the most popular pick for a double digit seed to make it to the Sweet 16. Harvard has sophomore PG Porter Klein and redshirt sophomore in Brad Hale. Hale is a great shooter while Klein turned down an offer from Georgetown to attend Harvard.

#13: Texas Southern: Great rebounding team and they are top 10 in the nation in second chance points.

#14 Bryant: This will be a good tune up game for UCLA.

#15 Monmouth: Monmouth is a fundamentally sound team, but it will be a long shot for them to make it out of the first round.

#16 UNC Asheville: Nope

Lundardi's Analysis

Final 4 Pick: UCONN

5 Best Players: Junior Higgins (UCONN), Dalvin Tucker (St. Johns), Jaxon Bosh (UCLA),
Howie Alexander (Texas Tech), Chris Johnson (Texas Tech)

Overseeded: Arizona

Under-seeded: Kansas State

If they catch fire they can make a run: Harvard

On Upset Alert: Arizona

Opening Round

West Region

#1 Villanova takes out Liberty with ease 88-42. Beau Love finished with 22 points and Alexi Howell added 20 of his own.

#9 Michigan upsets #8 Richmond 73-68 despite a monster night from Richmond PF Dakara Thunder. He finished with 33 points and 14 rebounds.

#4 UNC takes out #13 Leigh 87-63. Gabe Early had his best game since returning from injury with 21 points and 10 rebounds.

#5 Purdue survives a nail biter against #12 Marshall. Purdue needed a layup with 18 seconds remaining from Jamon Tiggs to clinch the game. Purdue would win 67-63. Tiggs led all scorers with 20.

#3 Wake Forest knocks off #14 Northern Illinois with ease behind 25 points from Ja'Ron Becker.

#6 Nevada beats #11 BYU 62-58 to advance to the 2nd round. Nevada SG JJ Royal hit four 3 pointers in this one.

#10 Iowa State eliminates #7 Arizona State 84-80 in overtime. ASU's Darius Van Gudy sent the game to overtime with a last second tip in, but Iowa State led the entire overtime period.

#2 KU overcomes a slow start against #15 UC Irvine. KU was trailing by 4 at halftime, but managed to outscore UC Irvine 45-20 in the second half of this one. KU would win 75-54.

Midwest Region

#1 Baylor dominates from start to finish as they knock off #16 64-38. The Baylor defense was too good in this one.

#8 Clemson takes down #9 Ohio State 74-60. Mecole Caffey had a game high 24 points.

#4 Cincinnati beats #13 Wofford 74-60. PJ Brogdon had a big night with 28 points on just 13 shots.

#5 Michigan State knocks off #12 Murray State 67-60. Murray State was the crowd favorite in this one with Cameron McKinney throwing down some insane dunks to start the game, but the duo of Teon Waiters and Brooks Buechler was too much.

#3 Washington eliminates #14 Coppin State 81-50. Zyheir Moss posts a 21 point, 10 assist, 10 rebound triple double.

#11 Oklahoma upsets #6 Houston 69-68. Donovan Sheppard hit a 3 pointer with 5 seconds remaining. Houston PG David Wiley missed a layup at the other end to win it.

#10 SMU advances past #7 Utah 76-71. SF Ramiir Pleiss has 25 points in the win and DJ Vanderbilt blocked 2 shots.

#2 Virginia survives a late push from #15 Delaware. Virginia had a 18 point lead with 3 minutes to go before Delaware SG Malik Bacon scored 11 straight points to cut the lead to 7. Virginia would end up weathering the storm to win 87-75. Bacon would finish with 33 points in the loss.

South Region

#1 Ole Miss beats Weber State 75-60. You could tell Ole Miss did not play with any fire in this one and still managed to beat Weber State

#9 Alabama beats #8 Illinois behind a 18 point, 11 assist double double from freshman PG Freddie Kaman. Bama would win 76-64.

#4 Kentucky cruises past #13 Houston Baptist 89-69. Shaun Murphy led all scorers with 27.

#5 Wisconsin edges out #12 UCF 64-60. Stedman White tried to will the Knights back to the second round for the second consecutive year, but he could not despite 27 points.

#3 Duke takes down #14 Drake 88-64 behind a career night for Braylon Tate who scored 39 points.

#6 LSU eliminates #11 Florida State 63-58. Florida State, who was a popular upset pick really disappointed this season. Bakari Jackson will certainly go pro after this season, and it appears the Seminoles wasted a very solid talent.

#10 Georgia Tech wins an OT thriller against #7 Butler 82-75. Tanner Ginyard had 18 points and 8 assists in the loss, while Dan Schroder led all scorers with 25 points for the Yellow Jackets.

#2 Oklahoma State beats #15 Youngstown State 76-60 behind a career high 21 points from Chet Perry.

East Region

#1 UCONN dismantles #16 UNC Asheville 104-54. Junior Higgins had 36 points while sitting out the final 15 minutes of the game.

#8 Mississippi State knocks off #9 Kansas State 64-60. While both K-State freshmen were solid for the Wildcats this season, they did not fulfill expectations. Both Tyler McCaskill and Kenny Maynor declared for the NBA after the game. Blake Curtis hit 5 3-pointers in the win.

#4 St. Johns moves past #13 Texas Southern 65-58. Dalvin Tucker posts 24 points and 11

rebounds in the win.

#12 Harvard upsets #5 Arizona just like 85% of CBS brackets predicted. Porter Klein dished out 8 assists in the win while Brad Hale had 24 points in a 86-78 Harvard win.

#3 UCLA beats #14 Bryant 80-61. Jaxon Bosh led all scorers with 30.

#6 South Carolina eliminates #11 Northern Iowa 76-69. Rodney Potter had 5 blocks in the game.

#10 Louisville beats #7 Memphis 65-62 behind their senior squad. Freshman PG OJ Wyatt had his best game of the season with 14 points and 5 assists off the bench. The Louisville starting 5 combined for 49.

#2 Texas Tech moved past #15 Monmouth 60-44. Texas Tech's defense is too good.

Round of 32

West Region

#1 Villanova moves into the Sweet 16 over #9 Michigan 68-59. Beau Love had 19 points in the win.

#5 Purdue moves past #4 UNC 80-74. Purdue PG Jamon Tiggs had 18 points and 7 assists, while SG Stefan King had a big night with 28 points.

#3 Wake Forest pushes past #6 Nevada into the Sweet 16 82-78. JJ Royal hit 6 3 pointers for the Wolfpack, but Ja'Ron Becker was too much for Nevada as he went off for 32 points.

#10 Iowa State advances to the Sweet 16 over #2 Kansas 73-62. Just when we thought Bill Self had turned a corner with C Chandler Walton, Walton only played 8 minutes in this game.

Midwest Region

#8 Clemson upsets #1 Baylor 58-57 on a buzzer beater from Mecole Caffey. Caffey drove to the lane and got up a circus shot over Nadab Joseph. The ball hit every part of the rim before finally going in.

#4 Cincinnati lands in the Sweet 16 by beating #5 Michigan State 71-64. PJ Brogdon finished with 30 points, 22 of which came in the paint.

#11 Oklahoma takes down #3 Washington 64-61. For the second game in a row Donovan Sheppard hit a 3 to win the game. This time Sheppard got up a deep 3 with 12 seconds remaining. Zyheir Moss missed a contested 3 at the other end despite Paxton Smith being open in the corner. Moss declared for the NBA shortly after the game after a great freshman year, while Smith is still undecided.

#2 Virginia advances to the sweet 16 over #10 SMU. Trevor Petrie had 6 steals in the game to go along with his 8 assists. Virginia wins 63-59.

South Region

#1 Ole Miss crushes #9 Alabama 76-52. Quintevin Cherry and Brock Landesberg nearly outscore Bama on their own as they scored a combined 49 points.

#4 Kentucky beats #5 Wisconsin 89-74. KJ Sampson had one of his better games with a 27 point, 10 assist double double.

#3 Duke moves past #6 LSU 75-65. Braylon Tate had 28 to lead all scorers.

#10 Georgia Tech upsets #2 Oklahoma State 76-73. Oklahoma State looked out of sync all game as Chet Perry and LaDreious Jones both picked up 3 fouls in the 1st half, with Jones fouling out with 8 minutes remaining in the game. Jones declared for the NBA draft shortly after the game on his instagram page.

East Region

#1 UCONN advances to the Sweet 16 over #8 Mississippi State 74-70. An off night for Junior Higgins where he only shot 35% from the field. He still managed 22 points.

#12 Harvard continues their run with a 76-73 victory over #4 St. Johns. Dalvin Tucker and Brad Hale went back and forth in this one, as they finished with 26 and 31 points respectively.

#3 UCLA moves past #6 South Carolina 71-70 on a game winning layup from Jaxon Bosh. Bosh would finish with 21. Nyvin Nelson would chip in 15 points and 6 assists.

#2 Texas Tech suffocates #10 Louisville 58-49 to move into the Sweet 16. OJ Wyatt was visibly frustrated after the loss and murmurs are that he would like to leave the program. Before Wyatt committed to Louisville, he was interested in Indiana, Iowa State, Minnesota, and Michigan State. Look for him to transfer there after sitting out a year.

Sweet 16

East

#5 Purdue continues their run with an upset over #1 Villanova 76-66. Jamon Tiggs and Stefan King have really played well during this run. Tiggs had 22 points and King had 25 of his own.

#3 Wake Forest ends the run of #10 Iowa State 75-58. Wake Forest was clearly the better team in this one and Ja'Ron Becker had his way with the Cyclones as he went for 30 points.

Midwest

#8 Clemson rolls past #4 Cincinnati 63-60 behind 26 points and 9 rebounds from Mecole Caffey. PJ Brogdon had a 25 point 11 rebound double double in the loss.

#2 Virginia ends #11 Oklahoma's run 70-63. The Virginia defense made Donovan Sheppard work for all 24 of his points, but no one else on the OU team had more than 12.

South

#1 Ole Miss continues to roll with a 76-71 victory over #4 Kentucky. Brock Landesberg had 22 points and 8 rebounds while Quintevin Cherry had an off night with only 14 points.

#3 Duke beats #10 Georgia Tech 76-69 behind 20 points from Braylon Tate.

West

#1 UCONN end Cinderella #12 Harvard 76-59. Junior Higgins had 22 points in the win. Brad Hale was able to lead all scorers with 24 points in the loss.

#3 UCLA upsets Texas Tech 76-68. Jaxon Bosh was able to score 30 points, which was the most on the Texas Tech defense all season.

Elite 8

#5 Purdue advances to the Final 4 over #3 Wake Forest on a buzzer beater 3 from Jamon Tiggs, 79-76. Jamon Tiggs had 23 points and 5 assists to go along with his 4 steals in the game. Stefan King played great defense on Ja'Ron Becker all night.

#2 Virginia ends #8 Clemson's run through the bracket 63-60. Mecole Caffey could not get going against the Virginia defense and would finish with just 14 points.

#3 Duke takes down tournament favorite #1 Ole Miss 95-92 in what might be the game of the tournament. This was an absolute offensive performance from both Braylon Tate and Quintevin Cherry. Tate would score the final 11 points for the Blue Devils to finish with 33 points, while Cherry hit big shot after big shot to keep pace. Brock Landesberg had trouble getting going inside as Jeryl Bledsoe and Josh Kirkland double teamed him any time he touched the ball.

#1 UCONN advances to the Final 4 over #3 UCLA 64-59. An off night from Junior Higgins in which he only scored 17 points and had 6 turnovers, but Jaxon Bosh was not able to take advantage.

Final 4

#5 Purdue continues their surprising run with a 76-68 victory over #2 Virginia. Jamon Tiggs has really made a name for himself and fans are loving the 5'9 sophomore. He had 21 points and 6 assists in this one while Stefan King would end up with 19 points.

#3 Duke finish off the final #1 seed UCONN 76-75. Braylon Tate had 19 points in this one and missed the game winning shot with 12 seconds remaining, but Jeryl Bledsoe went right back up with it and put the Blue Devils up 1. Junior Higgins would try a step back jumper from the 3 point line that would hit the back rim as time expired.

Championship Game

This game was an offensive show. SG Stefan King got the crowd going early with a massive dunk over Duke's 7'0 center, Jeryl Bledsoe. King would prove to be the hot hand early and would have 17 first half points for the Boilermakers, while Jamon Tiggs had 11 first half points. Braylon Tate managed to keep Duke close with 14 first half points of his own. Duke would trail Purdue 43-35 going into halftime. Braylon Tate would start the second half with a pair of 3 pointers to cut the Purdue lead down to 2. Purdue had trouble finding an answer to Duke big man, Josh Kirkland. Kirkland would pour in 13 second half points to give the Blue Devils a 78-83 lead heading into the final 3 minutes of the game. Jamon Tiggs, who had remained relatively quiet during the second half, hit a 3 pointer, then came down and delivered a no look pass to Stefan King cutting backdoor to tie the game up. With just under a minute left in the game. Braylon Tate would drive to the basket and get fouled and hit one of two free throws. With 37 seconds left, Purdue and Tiggs ran the shot clock down to just 5 seconds. Tiggs would take it up strong and get fouled and hit the layup. Tiggs would convert the free throw which would bring the score to 86-84 with 6 seconds remaining. Duke called timeout and Coach K drew up a play to get the ball into Tate's hands. Braylon Tate got the ball at the top of the key and took a step right, tried to crossover, but Stefan King got his hands in there. There was a scrum for a loose ball, but by the time that was sorted out, the clock had hit 0. #5 Purdue would take down #3 Duke to win their first ever NCAA title 86-84. Sophomore PG Jamon Tiggs was named tournament MVP after finishing with 23 points, 8 assists. Braylon Tate would finish with 33 points. While Ladreyous Jones had the upper hand on Tate heading into the draft, Tate might have closed the gap with an incredible tournament run.

NCAA Awards

1st Team All Americans

G-Junior Higgins, UCONN (Sr.)
G-Quintevin Cherry, Ole Miss (So.)
F-LaDreyous Jones, Oklahoma State (Fr.)
F-Ja’Ron Becker, Wake Forest (Jr.)
C-Brock Landesberg, Ole Miss (So.)

2nd Team All Americans

G-Jamon Tiggs, Purdue (So.)
G-Braylon Tate, Duke (Fr.)
F-Beau Love, Villanova (Sr.)
F-PJ Brogdon, Cincinnati (So.)
C-Nadab Joseph, Baylor (Fr.)

3rd Team All Americans

G-David Wiley, Houston (Jr.)
G-Zyheir Moss, Washington (Fr.)
G-Paxton Smith, Washington (So.)
F-Mecole Caffey, Clemson (Sr.)
F-Dalvin Tucker, St. Johns (Jr.)

All Defensive Team

G-Trevor Petrie, Virginia (Jr.)
F-Ja’Ron Becker, Wake Forest (Jr.)
F-Teon Waiters, Michigan State (Jr.)
C-Nadab Joseph, Baylor (Fr.)
C-Howie Alexander, Texas Tech (Sr.)

All Freshman Team

G-Zyheir Moss, Washington
G-Braylon Tate, Duke
F-LaDreyous Jones, Oklahoma State
F-Dakara Thunder, Richmond
C-Nadab Joseph, Baylor

National Awards

Wooden Award-Junior Higgins, UCONN (Sr.)

Bob Cousery-Jamon Tiggs, Purdue (So.)

Jerry West-Braylon Tate, Duke (Fr.)

Julius Erving-Jaron Becker, Wake Forest (Sr.)

Karl Malone-PJ Brogdon, Cincinnati (So.)

Abdul-Jabar-Brock Landesberg, Ole Miss (So.)

Defensive POY-Trevor Petrie, Virginia (Jr.)

After this season make sure you force the rule change 18 years and younger