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Arizona coach sticks up for 'Cats' tourney success

TUCSON, Ariz. (AP) — Coach Lute Olson is proud that his Arizona team is the representative of the Pacific-10 Conference in the NCAA Final Four, and he doesn't mind taking potshots at those back East.

"How many teams east of the Mississippi are in the Final Four?" Olson asks, knowing full well that only Duke from the East will be joining Arizona, Kansas and Oklahoma in Saturday's Final Four.

In reaching its highest-ever basketball heights, Arizona has gone a long way toward shedding its image as a "yes-but" team.

The "yes-but" stigma was all too prevalent this season, even amid the unprecedented media attention that the Wildcats drew. Their success — the team is currently 35-2 — has kept them ranked among the nation's top three teams since mid-December.

It worked this way:

- Yes, the Wildcats are good, but they play in the Pac-10.
- Yes, they beat Michigan, Syracuse, Iowa and Duke; but that was early in the season.
- Yes, they've made it into the NCAA tournament each year since 1985, but why did they lose in the first round of the big dance each time?

They finally may have dispelled a lot of those questions on the way to their first-ever Final Four berth in Kansas City by dispatching North Carolina by 18 points on Sunday.

The Wildcats came into the NCAA tournament with a Pac-10 Tournament championship in which they were largely untested. But it undoubtedly was the beating administered to North Carolina's highly respected Tar Heels, the epitome of East Coast establishment basketball, that dispelled what remaining doubters there have been to Arizona's season-long claim to legs as a top collegiate power.

So far at the NCAA thing, Wildcats have played their dance and danced their dance and kicked all over the other guys.

They have hit a record 35 wins accomplished by only other teams in NCAA history.

Olson vented his displeasure continued "yes-but" sniping team despite a schedule that included the Wildcats 10-pace season win over the Soviet team.

But the Wildcats, led by America Sean Elliott, also they're not finished yet. The cats are setting their sights on and-gun Oklahoma team, and the winner of the Kansas-Duke final in next Monday's championship.

Sooners take everything in stride, including Arizona's powerful stats

NORMAN, Okla. (AP) — Arizona has compiled very impressive numbers enroute to its semifinal meeting with Oklahoma in the Final Four.

The No. 3 Wildcats have played 37 games and won 35. In those victories, they have beaten their opponents by an average of nearly 22 points. They turn the ball over slightly more than 12 times a game, and their ball-handling guard, Steve Kerr, averages fewer than one turnover per game.

The Wildcats protect the ball well, shoot well, play strong defense, and can get up and down the floor.

All that seems to overwhelm Oklahoma Coach Billy Tubbs, whose fourth-ranked Sooners play Arizona Saturday in Kansas City.

"What that means is they do a great job of handling the ball," said Tubbs. "We've run into teams like that. Some teams are harder to force into mistakes than other teams, and

Arizona appears to be one of those, but we're just going to have to go out there and see."

Oklahoma has compiled a 34-3 record by using a suffocating, full-court defense to force turnovers and quicken the pace of the game. Sooner opponents turned it over 893 times and had the ball stolen on 465 occasions.

"Remember, Louisville only made one turnover in the first half against BYU. They made 22 in two halves against us," Tubbs said.

"What happened in the last game or the rest of the games this year, you can throw that out the window. This is another game, and we're going to test them and see if they can handle it. We're not going to change our game plan," Tubbs said.

Tubbs has always said he does not concern himself with what other teams do — only with what his team does. However, he had to pay attention to what Villanova did in the Southeast Regional, when the cats milked the 45-second shot on every possession and went half with a seven-point lead.

Oklahoma made adjustments in the second half and pulled in the final four minutes to what thus earned a berth in the Final Four.

"Villanova is a living example if we can't do it one way, we'll do it another way to do it," he said.

Oklahoma and Arizona can't outstanding balance, and can't primarily with the starters. Oklahoma's five first-teamers average minutes per game, and Arizona average nearly 30. All five starters score in double figures of Arizona's do.

Manning not only player Devils are worried about

DURHAM, N.C. (AP) — One would think Duke's practice Tuesday would focus on trying to stop Kansas All-American Danny Manning, but Coach Mike Krzyzewski said it's the Jayhawks four other starters the Blue Devils must worry about.

Krzyzewski said the Blue Devils didn't stop Manning when the 6-foot-11 senior scored 31 points and grabbed 12 rebounds in Duke's 74-70 overtime victory in February, so there's no reason to think they can stop him in the NCAA Tournament semifinal game Saturday in Kansas City, Mo.

"You can't ever say to a great player, 'Let him have what he's going to have,'" Krzyzewski said. "A great player thinks that he can have everything — and rightfully so."

"I think you have to make Man-

ning earn everything and not let him have everything.

"And when you're making him earn everything not to lose track of the other guys."

One of those other guys is 6-2 junior Scooter Barry, son of NBA Hall of Famer Rick Barry.

Averaging only 3.4 points, the guard hit for 15 against Kansas State in the Midwest Regional finals.

"What a great performance," Krzyzewski said about Barry's effort against Kansas State. "It's there, are you going to step forward to shoot it? Are you going to step forward and shoot it and make it? He did both of those things."

The Duke coach also mentioned 6-4 junior Milt Newton and 6-3 sophomore Kevin Pritchard as "capable players... scoring-wise."

Manning, averaging 24.6 points

and 8.7 rebounds, has scored more points 10 times this season leading the Jayhawks to a 25-cord.

Duke is 28-6 largely due to defense and a deep bench.

However, Krzyzewski said concerned about not having to serve center John Smith as guard Manning. Smith missed Temple game with a broken arm and is lost for the Final Four.

Danny Ferry, a 6-10 second All-American, 6-10 reserve Al delnaby and 6-5 starting center Bert Brickey all will be guarding Manning at different times, Krzyzewski said.

"I think it's an evenly matched game," Krzyzewski said. "Brown's philosophy and Manning pretty similar."

Manning gets Kodak player-of-year honors

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — The kid was tall and gangly, but remarkably quick and well coordinated for his age.

At 10, he overmatched every other youngster on the playground and was getting, naturally, a rather inflated opinion of his himself.

That's when Darnelle Manning stepped in.

"Danny," she said, "the world does not revolve around you. You're just part of a revolving world."

The kid listened to his mom. It was a philosophy that was practiced in the Manning household, not just preached.

And it became a part of the fabric of his personality.

Tuesday afternoon, Danny Manning accepted the Eastman Kodak trophy as college basketball player of the year.

As this latest award was given to the Big Eight's all-time scoring leader, speakers praised his athletic ability and unselfish attitude on the court, and Darnelle Manning stood nearby wearing a proud smile.

As Kansas prepares to meet Duke Saturday in the semifinals of the NCAA Tournament — Manning's second Final Four appearance in a brilliant four-year career at Kansas — that same unselfish attitude figures to be one of the best things going for the Jayhawks.

"Danny Manning makes other players around him better players,"

said retired Kansas State Coach Jack Hartman, who presented the Eastman Award.

Manning was a member of the 1986 Kansas team that lost to Duke in an opening Final Four game. Duke then lost to Louisville for the national championship.

Manning enters the 50th Final Four as the seventh all-time leading scorer in NCAA history with 2,895 points.

He's scored in double figures in 52 straight games.

In leading his injury-weakened team to this improbable plateau, he's averaging 26.8 points and seven rebounds a game.

His list of achievements and accomplishments stretch on and on. But the lessons he learned as a youngster have taken deep root.

"People talk about basketball players being unselfish and being willing to give up the ball if somebody else has a better shot, but that really does describe Danny," said Archie Marshall, Manning's closest friend on the team and a victim of a career-ending knee injury at mid-season.

"Danny really does care about other people. He's never been hung up on myself."

Many experts predict Manning will be the first player chosen in the next NBA draft.

Everyone agrees that a long, successful career as a professional awaits the versatile athlete.

Hawks beat Mavericks 120-106

ATLANTA (AP) — Dominique Wilkins scored 40 points, including six in a second-quarter run that gave Atlanta control of the game, and the Hawks defeated the Dallas Mavericks 120-106 Tuesday night.

Wilkins scored his six points and Antoine Carr added six as Atlanta outscored Dallas 20-7 to turn a 31-28 lead into a 51-35 lead by the period. The Mavericks got closer than seven points the rest of the way.

It was the 14th time this season Wilkins scored 40 or more points. It had been 131 games, the longest such streak in the NBA, against an opponent scored 40 or more against the Mavericks. The Hawks do it was Sleepy Floyd, then Golden State, who scored points on Dec. 6, 1986.

Mavericks Coach John MacLeod was ejected in the second period after getting his technical when he protested vigorously on what he thought should have been a goaltender call.

MacLeod hadn't been ejected since 1979, when he coached Phoenix, and had only two technicals this season.

Derek Harper led Dallas with 25 points and Rolando Blackman added 22.

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