

MARCH MADNESS PREDICTIONS IN WHICH THE AUTHOR SHOOTS AROUND IN THE DARK

When it comes to 'statistical analysis' I have my own system: if it looks like a statistic, just ignore it. Much like the sitting President of the United States, I go with my gut. And a couple of days ago I sat down with my gut, *The New York Times* March Madness preview, and an empty NCAA Men's tournament bracket. Despite having only watched three collegiate basketball games this year, I believe the following predictions will be mercilessly accurate.

Upsets:

Apart from several 9-over-8s, I have unflinching faith in George Mason (12) and believe they can beat Notre Dame (5) in the first round. Hell, I'm still riding high on their success of two years ago! And I am not sure why a college named for a French cathedral has an Irish mascot. Also, look for Baylor (11) to punch Purdue (6) right in the adam's apple. I've also used my gut-talisman to predict Oregon and Arizona will make it to the Thrilling Thirty-Two. I've got a soft spot for the Pac-10. Unfortunately, and inexplicably, I also have a soft-spot for Winthrop (13) and believe them capable of toppling Washington State (4).

Elitists:

To tell you the truth, my regional finals are pretty by-the-book. That is to say, 1s-v-2s in every bracket. However, in an unprecedented by-the-gut bit of odds-making, I picked North Carolina to *not* make the Final Four over one week ago, before the bracket had been drawn up even! How does he do it?!?

Finally:

Tennessee loses to Kansas, and Memphis beats UCLA then Kansas to win it all.

Admittedly, and proudly, I am the least qualified staff-member to deliver these predictions, which only adds to my pleasure in doing so.

—Eamon ffitich

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has reeled off the mortal coil. Why and wherefore?, you ask. Please, enough with questions. Still, I will tell you this: giving autographs all over town can get very tiresome.

3. We are hated by some and misunderstood by other
Despite the relative youth of our pamphlet, we have found time to be ridiculed by some and dismissed summarily by millions. In case you didn't know, that's the calling card of the truly avant-garde. In retrospect, our detractors will look ridiculous, however. Like the French Academy, who rejected the works of Monet and Toulouse-Lautrec, our naysayers will have so obviously missed the oncoming Zeitgeist as to inspire great guffaws of laughter in the future.

4. We're just aristocratic enough
Always, there must be something of the aristocrat about a man who cares to make something of himself in this world. Though having been raised in poverty, with hardly a ducat to our name, we members of the Shuttlecoque Sporting Club are no strangers to the works and days of the Leisured Class. Trust us when we say that your average pamphleteers don't use words like *Gadzooks* in context, like we do, or drinks such peaty scotches.

*Ball don't lie

It's not entirely clear to me what this phrase means, but Eamon says it all the time, and I trust him in such matters. Be advised, Reader!

Conclusion

Read *The New Enthusiast* early and often, and save those back issues. Despite our sometimes unkempt appearance and general truancy, we are firmly planted in what those in the know refer to as the *canon*.

—Carson Cistulli

EAMON FFITCH'S PORTLAND, OREGON IN WHICH THE AUTHOR SAYS ALL THE THINGS HE'S BEEN MEANING TO SAY, WITHOUT REALLY SAYING ANY OF THEM

Portland, Oregon was little more than a getaway for freewheeling states' rights democrats without their own marijuana plantations when I moved here in 1983, straight out of my mother's womb. Back then you could walk across the Willamette on the backs of Good Intentions. Ash still hung in the air. I liked what I saw, looking down from my plastic bassinet up on Hospital Hill. Every ratio I counted was Golden: cats to dogs, men to mice, girls to boys, hands to hips, beats per minute. It all added up. I ran for mayor before I could walk. I stood around on streetcorners, leaning against lampposts, until the Summer of 2002 when I joined the First Light Infantry Fighting Hidebounds and went eagerly to war for my hometown—to fight Sentimentality and Nostalgia. We stormed beaches and cut rugs. We treated our enemies like Swan Vestas. We soldiered for years—only slowing down at stop signs, never fully stopping—and fought knife-in-mouth-eyes-on-prize for Freedom. The freedom of always getting exactly what you want. It was good then, the War Years.

In those days—the days that would later be called 'Halcyon' by those absent—we crowded wooden stoops and spat across evergreen bushes into the wide tree-lined streets. Watching the hills. Waiting. We felt the shift coming. It is hard keeping a secret like this. What we have here is a diamond bigger than the Ritz-Carlton. And I've spent too much time already complaining about the sound of pick-axes falling at every hour of day and night. It doesn't bother me anymore. *Bring us your tired, your poor, your huddled masses...* This is the New World. The New Thing. The New 'Not LA, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle, Austin, Middle West, Small Town, etc.' This is a destination—a getaway—like it always has been and always will be. I should go down to the airport and hand out white towels at the arrivals gate. *Portland, Oregon will set you right and on the cheap. Mind your manners, please.* They come and go like skirt-lengths. Moved by magazines.

But for some of us—for me—this is the beginning *and* the end. My body is seventy percent Bull-Run tap water. I can show you a brick in Pioneer Square with the family name etched in it. I remember when you had to go to Southeast to see a bumper sticker with 'Keep Portland Weird' printed on it. *I remember 63 wins and 19 losses...* Time passes and Sentimentality is still my enemy. Nostalgia is still my enemy. I can see the next wave, far off, about to crash. I can see the floodwaters rising. From way up here, I can see for miles and miles. I'll come down when all that rotten shit has been washed back out to sea.

—Eamon ffitich

ISAIAH THOMAS

Reboundingwise we have a lot of ground to make up except for well we just have to hang tough, hang in there, keep making progress I know the time for this is past but this is what we have, I know you know it's what it is, it's where we're at, and I don't know what you know if you can't fight won't you know lay out, if you don't have pride. I don't think it's his fault or my fault and I won't I can't answer that. You know. I haven't given up, and I know a lot of you all of you will laugh or say - you know, I really believe that this team is going to be a winning team and I'm going to be a part of that and some of these players will be a part of that a part of this chance for everyone to be on the same page.

—Justin Jamail