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Top draw no favor for Kansas

By EARL WATT

- Daily Leader

Now that the brackets have been released, the Jayhawk Nation is celebrating an overall No. 1 seed.

But tell me how that ranking equates throughout the rest of the bracket?

Let's get the obvious out of the way: Kansas ends up in a bracket of 16 in the Midwest with a record of 32-2. Those only two losses came one the road at Oklahoma State and Tennessee. So guess who is in the 16 teams in Kansas Midwest bracket? That's right, Tennessee and Oklahoma State.

While Kansas is the No.1 overall seed, Duke in the South Region will be playing the winner of the play-in game while Kansas will play Lehigh. Duke will get the winner of Arkansas Pine Bluff or Winthrop.

I'm not predicting that Kansas will be the first No. 1 seed to lose to a 16, but is Kansas truly the overall No. 1 when they don't get the play-in winner?

But that's just the tip of the iceberg for this bracket.

Assuming first round wins for all No. 1 seeds, Kansas will face either Missouri Valley Conference tournament champion Northern Iowa or historic basketball powerhouse UNLV. The only tougher challenge in the second round for a No. 1 will be Kentucky who may have to face Texas if the Longhorns can get by Wake Forest in the best 8-9 match-up in the tourney.

If all No. 1 seeds advance to the Sweet 16, Kansas will more than likely face Michigan State, the only team in America to reach the Elite 8 in the last three seasons. Tom Izzo is arguably the best Big Dance coach today, getting critical wins when they count the most.

Should Kentucky advance to the Sweet 16, their four-seed match-up would be Wisconsin, also from the Big 10. KU potential opponent Michigan State finished tied for first in the Big 10, the Badgers fourth. Advantage to Kentucky.

Syracuse would face No. 4 Vanderbilt, and Duke would get No. 4 Purdue who also tied with Michigan State for the Big 10 lead.

A step beyond would be a match-up for a trip to the Final Four, and assuming all No. 1 teams advance, Kansas would face either Ohio State (who tied with Michigan State and Purdue for the best record in the Big 10), Georgetown, Oklahoma State or Tennessee, all very tough match-ups.

In contrast Kentucky would get New Mexico, Clemson or West Virginia.

Duke would get Villanova, Baylor, Notre Dame or Richmond.

Two years ago, Kansas had to defeat the best Final Four ever when all No. 1 seeds advanced. If Kansas wants to win another championship, they will have to face arguably the toughest overall No. 1 seed schedule in the history of the tournament.

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