

# In Sweet 16, count on experience

## UCLA on top in reseed of remaining men's teams

Scott Gleeson  
USA TODAY

The Sweet 16 is set. The first two rounds of the men's NCAA Tournament trimmed the 64 teams to 16, and there were several bracket-busting upsets that have added chaos. Now, those survivors will square off Thursday through Sunday in the Sweet 16 and Elite Eight with a slot in the Final Four on the line. Which of these teams are cut out for the second weekend of March Madness? Which of them has the best chance to cut down the nets in New Orleans? USA TODAY Sports ranks the Sweet 16 teams based on the potential of winning the national championship.

### 1. UCLA

The Bruins (27-7) unexpectedly reached the Final Four last year, bowing out in a thrilling semifinal to Gonzaga. Virtually every player on that roster returned to set up high expectations for 2021-22, but UCLA spent a majority of the season overshadowed in the Pac-12 by Arizona. Now in the NCAA Tournament, coach Mick Cronin's group has found that extra gear that propelled it on that deep run last March. UCLA's quartet of guards – Johnny Juzang, Jaime Jaquez Jr., Tyger Campbell and Jules Bernard – is as dangerous as any remaining in the tourney. ● **No. 4 seed.**

### 2. Villanova

Coach Jay Wright has arguably the most seasoned team of this tournament, with the Wildcats (28-7) a main beneficiary of the extra COVID-19 year of eligibility. It starts with two-time Big East player of the year Collin Gillespie, in his fifth year running the point for the Wildcats; Gillespie (16 points per game, 41.6% from the 3-point arc) was on the roster the last time 'Nova won the national title in 2018. Another fifth-year senior is Jermaine Samuels, who had 17 points and eight rebounds versus Ohio State in the second round. ● **No. 2 seed.**

### 3. Duke

The Blue Devils (30-6) have seemed to find their identity and team chemistry at the right time, finding an extra gear in their second-round win over Michigan State, particularly in the final five minutes. Paolo Banchero has always been this team's most talented player, but the supporting cast is starting to step up, with five players in double digits for Duke versus the Spartans. Guard Jeremy Roach has taken over the starting point guard position, and this Duke team is playing inspired in trying to keep coach Mike Krzyzewski's final season alive. ● **No. 2 seed.**

### 4. Gonzaga

The Bulldogs (28-3) aren't nearly as talented and dynamic as they were on last year's national runner-up team, but they still have all the pieces to win it all and become coach Mark Few's first team to cut down the nets. Drew Timme (18.2 points, 6.7 rebounds) is having an excellent NCAA Tournament – going for 32 points and 13 rebounds versus Georgia State and 25 points and 14 rebounds versus Memphis. The 'Zags lead the nation in scoring (87.8) and field goal percentage (53%). Guard Andrew Nembhard has been an unsung hero for this group, while freshman standout Chet Holmgren, who has yet to fully hit his



Johnny Juzang (3) and UCLA have been overshadowed by Arizona in the Pac-12. CHRIS CODUTO/USA TODAY SPORTS

potential, has the ability to change the game if he's playing physical on the interior. ● **No. 1 seed.**

### 5. Texas Tech

The Red Raiders (27-9) have an elite defense behind first-year coach Mark Adams, ranking first in the nation in KenPom's defensive efficiency ratings. It was on display in the closing minutes versus Notre Dame in the second round as well as in a bundle of close Big 12 victories. There aren't any elite offensive players on this team, but Bryson Williams (13.9 points) leads a group with five players averaging nine points or more. ● **No. 3 seed.**

### 6. Kansas

The No. 1-seeded Jayhawks (30-6) have benefited from an added dimension to their already potent offense with the emergence of Remy Martin, an Arizona State transfer who took more of a back seat this year but has broken out as a lethal scorer in this NCAA Tournament. Martin led KU in scoring in both of its games. Ochai Agbaji (19.4 points) is Kansas' All-American guard and Christian Braun is a glue guy who does the little things (blocks, clutch buckets). ● **No. 1 seed.**

### 7. Arizona

The Wildcats (33-3) got 58 points from their two best players, Benedict Mathurin (30 points) and Christian Koloko (28 points) in a second-round overtime win over TCU. Mathurin and Koloko scored Arizona's final 15 points, but if point guard Kerr Kriisa, recovering from an ankle injury, can provide more offense (he was 1-for-10 in the TCU game) along with others, Arizona can be more of the full package in the second weekend. ● **No. 1 seed.**

### 8. Purdue

The Boilermakers (29-7) have made it further than some of their Big Ten counterparts and have all the pieces to get coach Matt Painter to his first Final Four. It starts with Jaden Ivey (17.6 points), a dynamic playmaker who can carry the team offensively. Ivey and the rest of this veteran cast have the second-most efficient offense in the country, per KenPom. Purdue's strength is also on the glass, second nationally in

rebounding margin. ● **No. 3 seed.**

### 9. North Carolina

The No. 8-seeded Tar Heels (26-9) found another gear and discovered their identity when they embarrassed Duke in Krzyzewski's final home game March 5. The team's backbone is Armando Bacot (16.4 points, 12.5 rebounds), whose play on the interior gives UNC an advantage. But it's been the guard play of Caleb Love (23 points versus Marquette in the first round) and R.J. Davis (30 points in the win versus Baylor). Brady Manek is North Carolina's X-factor. If the 6-foot-9 senior big man is hitting from beyond the arc, Hubert Davis' team is really hard to stop. ● **No. 8 seed.**

### 10. Houston

The Cougars (31-5) lead the nation in field goal percentage defense and their smothering approach was on full display in their second-round win over Illinois. Coach Kelvin Sampson's team often feeds off its defense to generate offense, which leads to Houston controlling the game's tempo and taking opponents out of their offensive rhythm. The backcourt trio of guards Taze Moore (21 points against Illinois), Jamal Sheard (18 points) and Kyler Edwards (15 points) can be lethal in the Sweet 16. ● **No. 5 seed.**

### 11. Arkansas

The Razorbacks (27-8) are back in the NCAA Tournament's second weekend for consecutive years. Coach Eric Musselman has a dangerous team that was overshadowed in the SEC by teams like Kentucky and Tennessee that are no longer dancing. JD Notae (18.4 points, 3.6 assists) is a game-changer with his ability to create for himself and his teammates off the bounce and Jaylin Williams (10.5 points, 9.8 rebounds, 1.1 blocks) ignites this team in the frontcourt. ● **No. 4 seed.**

### 12. Providence

The Friars (27-5) defeated Richmond in the second round by 28 points after silencing a dangerous South Dakota State team. Coach Ed Cooley believes his Big East regular-season champions can extend this deep run with Providence in its first Sweet 16 in 25 years. If the Friars can shoot well from three the

## NCAA Sweet 16 games

### Eastern Daylight Time

#### Thursday

Arkansas vs. Gonzaga, 7:09 p.m. (CBS)  
Michigan vs. Villanova, 7:29 p.m. (TBS)  
Texas Tech vs. Duke, 9:39 p.m. (CBS)  
Houston vs. Arizona, 9:59 p.m. (TBS)

#### Friday

Saint Peter's vs. Purdue, 7:09 p.m. (CBS)  
Providence vs. Kansas, 7:29 p.m. (TBS)  
North Carolina vs. UCLA, 9:39 p.m. (CBS)  
Iowa State vs. Miami, 9:59 p.m. (TBS)

way they did against Richmond (12-for-22), they have a shot at beating anyone in this tournament. ● **No. 4 seed.**

### 13. Saint Peter's

The Peacocks (21-11) have a chance to do what no other 15 seed has done in reaching the Elite Eight. Coach Shaheen Holloway has gotten this team to play inspired, stunning No. 2 Kentucky in the first round and then No. 7 Murray State. The formula has included a poised offense and relentless defensive effort. KC Ndefo is a spark plug on both ends, evidenced by his stat line of 17 points, 10 rebounds and six blocks versus Murray State. In both wins, Doug Edert has come off the bench to provide clutch shot-making, which will be needed in the Sweet 16. ● **No. 15 seed.**

### 14. Miami (Florida)

The No. 10-seeded Hurricanes (25-10) stunned No. 2 Auburn to get to the Sweet 16 and took down a solid Southern California Trojans team in the first round. Coach Jim Larrañaga has a team that's peaking at the right time after playing itself off the bubble in February. Guard play is what Miami is good at, with seniors Kameron McGusty (17.5 points) and Charlie Moore (12.7 points, 4.6 assists) giving the Hurricanes a fighting chance against just about any team. ● **No. 10 seed.**

### 15. Iowa State

The Cyclones simply being here is an epic storyline considering this program was 2-22 last season and 0-18 in the Big 12. Getting this team to the bubble and even in March Madness was an accomplishment for coach T.J. Otzelberger. Can ISU advance further? It's unlikely. But one thing this team has going: Its two best players were horrible in a second-round upset of Wisconsin, and the Cyclones still won. Leading scorer Izaiah Brockington had 10 points on 4-for-15 shooting, while Tyrese Hunter, Iowa State's hero versus LSU in Round 1 with 23 points, had four points on 1-for-10 shooting. If either of those players play up to their ability, look out. ● **No. 11 seed.**

### 16. Michigan

The Wolverines (19-14) have gone from a team on the NCAA Tournament bubble to one in the Sweet 16. After a season of struggles, Michigan is finally playing like the team it was expected to be as a preseason No. 6. Hunter Dickinson, a 7-1 big man with a great touch and passing ability, had 27 points and 11 rebounds in Michigan's upset of Tennessee. But the X-factor may be guard play, where Eli Brooks and Devante' Jones can cause havoc on both ends. Jones wasn't at full strength in the Tennessee win so having him healthy will be a must. ● **No. 11 seed.**

MARKETPLACE TODAY

To view more Classified listings, visit: [classifieds.usatoday.com](https://classifieds.usatoday.com)

For advertising information: 1.800.397.0070 [www.russelljohns.com/usat](http://www.russelljohns.com/usat)

<div>NOTICES</div> <div>PUBLIC NOTICE</div> <p>This is a De Jure Grand Jury Findings of Facts that the grievances brought before this Grand Jury on this day March 5, 2022, in a Presentment of Declaration by People assembled in Georgia State, and find these grievances true and correct. Therefore, the Grand Jury finds that the People in Georgia shall assemble to re-assemble a De Jure Constitutional Republic.</p> <p>This entire document may be viewed by internet at: <a href="https://national-assembly.net/blog/index.php/na-blog/georgia-general-jural-assembly-public-notice">https://national-assembly.net/blog/index.php/na-blog/georgia-general-jural-assembly-public-notice</a></p> <p>Notice to Agents is notice to Principals. Notice to Principals is notice to Agents. The content of this notice is not the opinion or claims of this News Paper publication, its employees or management.</p> <div>GET NOTICED!</div> <p>Advertise in USA TODAY's Marketplace! Call: 1-800-397-0070</p>	<div>ANNOUNCEMENTS</div> <div>HAVE YOU BEEN CLASSIFIED AS A HIGH RISK DRIVER DUE TO DUI, DWI OR TICKETS FOR AGGRESSIVE DRIVING?</div> <div>Serenity is here to help by making SR-22 insurance easy to get and affordable for everyone.</div> <div>800-509-9315</div> <p>THE CALL &amp; QUOTE ARE FREE.</p>	<div>BUSINESS</div> <div>FINANCIAL</div> <div>Are you getting hit with high interest rates because of a low credit score? Improve it today!</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FREE Consultation</li><li>• FREE Credit Evaluation</li></ul> <div>800-852-4931</div> <div>IMPROVE YOUR CREDIT SCORE</div>	<div>FINANCIAL</div> <div>ELIMINATE your overwhelming debt</div> <p>We can help if your total debt is \$10,000 or more!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ CREDIT CARD DEBT</li><li>✓ MEDICAL DEBT</li><li>✓ PERSONAL LOANS</li></ul> <div>800-825-1306</div> <p>Avoid bankruptcy today and start over completely debt-free.</p> <div>THE CALL IS FREE.</div>	<div>MARKETPLACE</div> <div>HEALTH/FITNESS</div> <div>ATTENTION</div> <p>If you've had Hernia Surgery and have experienced any</p> <div>COMPLICATIONS</div> <p>you may be entitled to</p> <div>SIGNIFICANT CASH COMPENSATION.</div> <div>CALL THE HERNIA MESH HELPLINE NOW AT</div> <div>800-478-7176</div>	<div>HEALTH/FITNESS</div> <div>TALCUM POWDER SETTLEMENT</div> <p>If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with ovarian cancer after using talcum based products you may be entitled to significant compensation</p> <div>800-208-3526</div>
---	--	---	--	---	---