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Picks to click in the NCAA Tourney

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It's that time of year again. No, it's not the spring thaw, but the NCAA Tournament. Sixty-four teams and many more brackets, picks, pools and wagers. To help, we have made our Final Four picks. (These are for recreational purposes only, please no wagering.)

East: Syracuse, which has the best player in the country (Carmelo Anthony), looked like a solid Elite Eight team before the brackets were announced. Now, however, since their road to the Final Four goes through Albany (giving them virtual home court advantage), Syracuse is the pick to advance to New Orleans, beating Oklahoma in the regional final. **Dark horse:** Penn.

Midwest: Riding a 24-game winning streak and an undefeated conference record, Kentucky should easily breeze through their bracket. Their tough, physical style of play is tailor made for March. A lack of star

power, however, may do them in if an opposing team gets hot. A possible threat is Pittsburgh, but the 'Cats will be able to handle the Panthers in the regional final. **Dark horse:** Weber State.

South: Home to perhaps the most overrated team in the country, Texas, the South appears to be the weakest bracket in the tournament. Although the Longhorns have the second-best player in the country (T.J. Ford), they will finish second in this bracket, probably to a deeper, more athletic Florida Gators squad in the regional final, even though the game will played in San Antonio. **Dark horse:** UNC Wilmington

West: This is where the fun starts. By far the toughest region in the tournament, the West is home to four of the most dangerous teams in the land: Arizona, Kansas, Duke and Illinois. For some reason, the selection committee put champions of four "power" conferences in this bracket. (Arizona and Kansas won their regular season crowns, while Duke and Illinois won their conference tournaments.) With

all the talent here, the pick is the most talented team, and Arizona has clearly the deepest, most skilled squad. Their impressive depth will push them over-the-top against Kansas in what should be a rugged final. **Dark horse:** Central Michigan

Final Four: In the game that eventually should have been the National Championship (thanks again, selection committee), Arizona and Kentucky will hook up in what promises to be one of the great semifinals in Final Four history. Even though Kentucky is the more physical of the two, 'Zona's superior talent level will win out. In the other semi, Florida and their super freshman (guard Anthony Roberson) will wear out the slower and more plodding Syracuse, who will miss the home-court advantage they enjoyed the previous weekend.

National Championship: After prevailing in what could be one of the great college basketball games of all time, Arizona should be able to wake up in time to beat an overmatched Florida in an anti-climactic Monday night.