



The Way

I See It

by Timothy Egan
Promethean Sports Editor

Thriller. When Michael Jackson fans hear the word Thriller, they flash back to 1982. When I hear Thriller, I think of the games that have been played in the 1990 NCAA college basketball tournament.

Just as Thriller may be the best album in history because of record sales, the 1990 NCAA tourney may be the best in tourney history because of its thrills. Beat It, Billie Jean and Vincent Price are a collage in the memory of fans of the not-so-masculine, one-gloved wonder. For this basketball fan, the nail biting, last second shots with time running out and the 30 games won by four p. ints or less, have been more entertaining than the one fifth of the Jackson Five.

Now it's crunch time. The 64 teams that started the tourney have been filtered into the Final Four. The University of Nevada Las Vegas, Georgia Tech, Duke and Arkansas have battled their way to Denver. Each team has had to play exceptionally to get into the position they own.

Taking a look at how these teams made it to the Final Fab Four we have seen some barn burning games. Arkansas went to the wire against Texas, Princeton, and Dayton. Georgia Tech was taunted by Minnesota, Louisiana State and went into overtime against Michigan State.

Duke, making its fourth appearance in the Final Four in the past ten years, kept some close ones for themselves. Connecticut almost nipped them in the East Regional Championship game and St. John's only fell by four points.

UNLV had the easiest road to Denver. Ball State was the only team to keep the outcome of the game below double digits. UNLV was invloved in the game that should have been the best showcase game in the tournament.

The late Hank Gathers' Loyola Marymount team faced the Runnin' Rebels in the West Regional Championship. These two teams have the same offensive strategy, "let 'em fly." Not expected to be a defensive experience, the two teams battled to see who would "stop and pop" the most and be most successful.

Well, the game was what was expected, almost. It was definitely run and gun, but it wasn't down to the wire. LMU's spiritual ride for Gathers ended in a bad way, 131-101 in favor of UNLV.

Now we have our Final Four and since it is NCAA time, it's also time for thousands of people to enter the traditional tourney pool. You can enter a pool at work, between friends or at your favorite watering hole.

A pool is usually run in one of two ways. You either pick the entire tournament and base the winner of the pool on correct picks or you have a blind draw. With the blind draw method the thing is the best thing.

People enter a pool to prove their sports knowledge or try to boost their income. A pool gives a barroom basketball boaster a chance to show his drinking partners he knows all about college hoops. A pool gives a couch potato coach an opportunity to see if he really knows what he has been spouting out all year long.

Well for those of you who entered a pool in which you pick the outcome, you are probably very upset at this point in time. There is just no way possible to have picked this year's outcome to the 63 games. There were too many close calls, come from behinds, last second counters, and even some unexpected blowouts this year.

If you were able to call each game, there would have to be an investigation by the Pope because it sure would have be a miracle or an act of God.

There may be some unhappy pool players but there are a ton of happy basketball fans. The excitement of each one-point game, the upsets, the Cinderella stories and the ail out good competition around the country, has made this tournament a great experience in basketball. This tourney also produced a dedication by Bo Kimble to deceased teammate Gathers. In each game Kimble shot his first freethrow left handed in memory of LMU's lefthanded leading scorer.

This tournament has also proven the talent balance throughout the country. There are not only great players at the college level, there are great teams. Great teams that have made the competition equal and balanced throughout the country, making a tournament unable to be forgotten.

There are three games left to this thrill. Michael Jackson fans can be thrilled the way they want to be thrilled but I'll take the tourney over those worn out songs on that tape in the back of my collection that hasn't been played since 1983.

And that's the way I see it.