

RUTGERS BUBBLE WATCH: 3/9/22 by Tony Sarthou

Who should Rutgers fans be rooting for tonight? We examine the games Rutgers fans should be monitoring and why they are important.

Butler (+6.5) vs Xavier

Xavier is by most accounts in the field as of today. They appear on 137 of 141 brackets on Bracket Matrix as of this posting. The Selection Committee has made it clear that recent results do not weigh more in their deliberations. That may be a good thing for Xavier who, if they were to lose to Butler, would finish the season 2-8.

Their NET team sheet is solid with 5 Q1 and 9 Q1-2 wins. However, none of the Q1s are *high Q1 wins whereas Rutgers has 4 high Q1 wins. An Xavier loss here would fall in Q3 and could drop their NET into the 40s. The only advantage their profile would have over Rutgers would be their NET, and that advantage would be less compelling in the 40s.

BC (+9) vs Wake Forest

The weakness of the ACC will generate several compelling games for the Rutgers bubble-watcher! Wake is somewhat comfortably in the field at the moment, appearing on 135 of 141 brackets on Bracket Matrix. That said, Wake along with Miami and Notre Dame join Rutgers among the last 7 at-large teams in the field, with all 3 ACC squads positioned ahead of the Knights on the bubble. As with Xavier, a loss here would be of the Q3 variety and with only one Q1 win, the resume is a bit light and dependent on what would be a 40s NET ranking.

Louisville (+6) vs Virginia

UVA is not really on the bubble as they appear on exactly 1 of 141 brackets on Bracket Matrix today. However, a run to the ACC final is very manageable in a (way) down ACC. A game with an up and down UNC team that just got off the bubble isn't a particularly daunting task for a team 3 years removed from a national title.

With a neutral site win against Providence and road win at Duke a trip to the ACC semi-final would put UVA squarely on the bubble. Earning a rematch with Duke in the final would likely punch their ticket to the Dance. The sooner they are off the board, the better.

Clemson (+5) vs Virginia Tech

More ACC fun! Like UVA, VaTech also appears on only 1 bracket on Bracket Matrix. Unlike UVA, they don't have the compelling wins that UVA has - their only Q1 win is a 1-point road win at (NET 59) Miami. With the ACC being what it is, 2 wins to get them to the semi-final is not a stretch. That would run their total win tally to 21 and pair favorably with a low 30s NET. Very bubbly!

Oregon State (+9) vs Oregon

Oregon is not on the bubble, nor should they be! That said, the PAC 12 is top heavy, and Oregon has demonstrated they can beat the heavyweights going 3-2 against Arizona, USC, and UCLA. In fact, the 2

losses are by a combined 4 points so “good Oregon” can play with anyone. Winning the tournament is not far-fetched and would result in Oregon stealing a bid from the at-large pool.

****High Quad 1 consists of Home wins against NET 1-15, Neutral wins against NET 1-25 and Road wins against NET 1-40***