

The Game

Notre Dame vs. Middle Tenn. St.

Time 2:30 p.m. EST

Series First meeting

Rankings Notre Dame 18th (AP)
Middle Tenn. St. unranked

Tickets Game is sold out

NCAA History 21st appearance
Won 22, lost 24

The Region

(record/record vs. ND)

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. North Carolina (29-33-11) | 9. Michigan (19-116-9) |
| 2. Syracuse (26-68-3) | 10. W. Kentucky (28-80-1) |
| 3. Purdue (24-419-20) | 11. N.C. State (20-144-2) |
| 4. TCU (23-61st game) | 12. M. Tenn. St. (22-6/ 1st game) |
| 5. Notre Dame (22-7) | 13. Marshall (25-51-0) |
| 6. Florida (21-10/ 1st game) | 14. Northeastern (27-6/ 1st game) |
| 7. West Virginia (23-78-3) | 15. Ga. Southern (20-10/ 1st game) |
| 8. Navy (26-57-1) | 16. Pennsylvania (13-1318-2) |

The Site

Charlotte Coliseum (11,666)



TV and Radio

ESPN Cable,
WNDU-TV Ch. 16

WSBT-AM 960,
WNDU-AM 1500



Irish Extra

NCAA Tournament

The Observer

Thursday, March 12, 1987

From tragedy to tourney

Rivers returns from injury to lead Irish into NCAAs

By DENNIS CORRIGAN
Sports Editor

For Notre Dame's David Rivers, the 1986-87 basketball season has been a long climb.

Barely more than six months ago, Rivers was in a hospital fighting for his life. Now he's once again leading the Irish fight for a national title.

On Aug. 24, 1986, Rivers and former Irish teammate Ken Barlow were involved in an auto accident in which Rivers was hurled through the window of the van Barlow was driving. Rivers suffered a 15-inch cut to his abdomen and underwent three hours of surgery.

He remained in the hospital until Sept. 2 and into the Notre Dame infirmary until Sept. 13. At the time, basketball was not a priority, recovering from the accident and trying to keep up with classes was.

On Sept. 21, Rivers began a long and trying rehabilitation program which included treadmill work, limited weights, riding an exercise cycle and later jogging and shooting in a swimming pool. Through it all, Rivers kept his perspective, and worked to get back on the court. Now with an NCAA berth

secured he knows it was all worth it.

"It was something that I was enthusiastic about doing because I knew it was geared to getting better and my getting back on the court," says Rivers. "So all the rehab and the training was for this. It was for us getting an NCAA bid and having a shot at the title."

It wasn't until Oct. 6 that Rivers began to run on a track and Nov. 1 that he began to shoot and have limited participation in practice. Finally on Nov. 16, he was able to practice full speed.

He saw 34 minutes of play in Notre Dame's opening loss to Western Kentucky. Less than two weeks later, he went the full 40 minutes in Notre Dame's near upset of Indiana. From then on he began to show improvement, scoring 16 and 20 points in wins over Cornell and Brigham Young. But as he progressed, Rivers had to deal with reporter after reporter who was writing a story on his miraculous recovery.

"Yes, I was (tired of talking about the accident)," says Rivers. "But you've got to look at it this way, they're doing their job. I guess people are

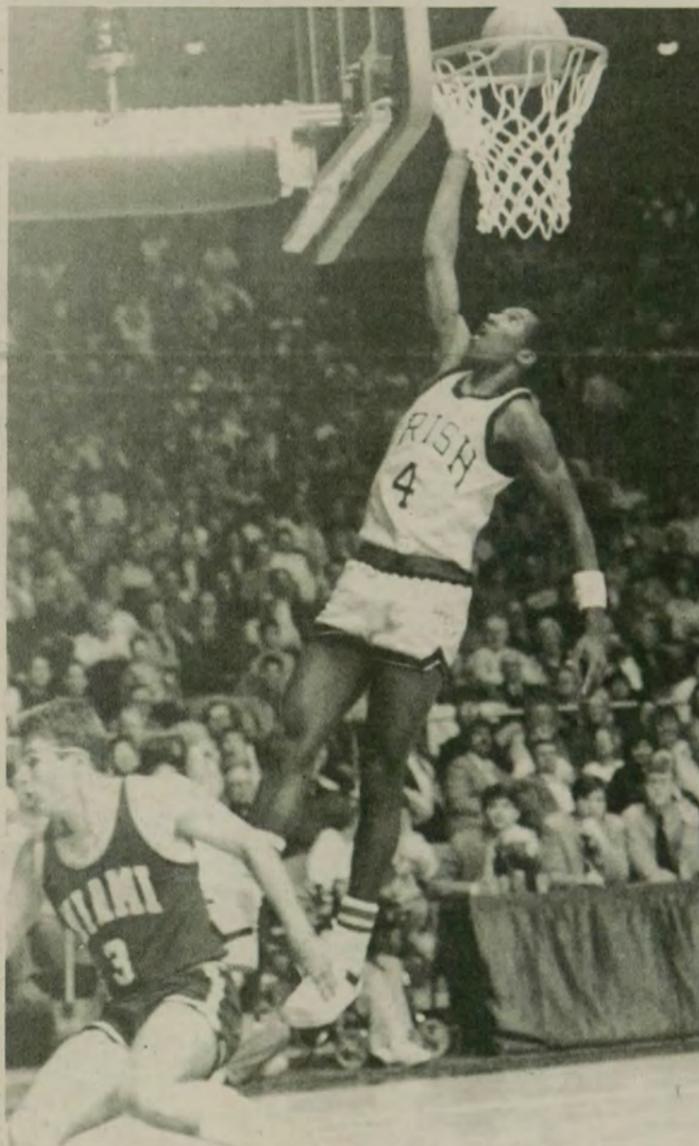
curious. They want to know. I looked at it in that way. I didn't think of it as being a negative. I tried to see the positive side of it just to keep me from being, I guess, bored."

Looking back now, Rivers gives credit to the extended Notre Dame family for giving him the strength to continue.

"When I was having a crisis, everyone was there for me," says Rivers. "No matter what it was I needed, there was someone there to give it to me. Coach Phelps was there, the guys on the team were there as were families around South Bend. It helps out a lot because you know there are people out there pulling for you and praying for you. It keeps your spirits up."

But just as he started to show signs of getting over his accident, Rivers tore a thigh muscle in late December and sprained an ankle (he still wears a water cast on it) in January against Creighton. Both injuries hampered his effectiveness and the Irish struggled into the last week of January with a 9-5 mark. Rivers now admits to feeling a little frustrated.

see RIVERS, page 3



Greg Kohs

Rivers' soaring layup over Miami's Kevin Presto symbolized his rise from near death to a shot at a national title.

Hicks' fills roles for ND as career draws to close

By TERRY LYNCH
Sports Writer

Sometimes success is just a matter of waiting your turn.

For guard Scott Hicks, it is this formula that has led the senior Irish co-captain from Indianapolis to grab his share of the limelight in his final court campaign. Hicks' solid play in the backcourt with teammate David Rivers has been a constant force on the tournament-

bound Irish team.

But there's been a lot more to it than that. Scott Hicks wasn't in a van accident in the summer and doesn't have a 15-inch scar across his stomach. But when The Accident happened, Hicks found himself in a strange position - alone in the backcourt.

"I just think Scotty knew this year that we needed more scoring from the second guard

spot with Stevenson, Royal, and Rivers being the main guys on offense," said Head Coach Digger Phelps.

"I think he just has a lot of confidence right now. We've just let him go all year and he's played very, very well."

Hicks responded in the backcourt this season by averaging 11.2 points per game, way above his 5.4 average last year and slightly higher than the 8.8

average during his sophomore year. Hicks is second to Rivers in steals with 33, and is third on the team in rebounding, averaging 4.2 boards a contest. He led the team in scoring in an early-season loss to Indiana with 18 and in the upset of 15th-ranked Duke with 19.

But for all of the statistics, Hicks has viewed his role this year as just a matter of filling in the voids left by year's seniors.

"I think this year I had to take a different role out on the court than last year," said Hicks. "Last year we had Tim Kempton, Kenny Barlow, Jim Dolan and Joseph Price and now this year with David, Mark, and Donald, I just take a different role and look at it a different way.

"I think my role is to do what is needed at a particular time.

see HICKS, page 2



Greg Kohs

Head Coach Digger Phelps - "We're not done yet, baby!"

ND's NCAA history

Year	Finish
1953	East Regional runnerup
1954	East Regional runnerup
1957	Midwest Regional 3rd place
1958	Midwest Regional runnerup
1960	Midwest Regional 1st round
1963	Midwest Regional 1st round
1965	Midwest Regional 1st round
1969	Midwest Regional 1st round
1970	Midwest Regional 4th place
1971	Midwest Regional 4th place
1974	Midwest Regional 3rd place
1975	Midwest Regional 4th place
1976	Midwest Regional semifinals
1977	East Regional semifinals
1978	NCAA Finals 4th place
1979	Midwest Regional runnerup
1980	Midwest Regional 2nd round
1981	East Regional semifinals
1985	Southeast Regional 2nd round
1986	Midwest Regional 1st round



Greg Kohs

In an act typical of the closeness of the Irish basketball team and its fans, Hicks introduced his mother to the crowd following his final game at the ACC

The Observer

Irish Extra Editor..... Dennis Corrigan
Irish Extra Design..... Matt Breslin

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Hicks chases Tourney dream

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If I have to shoot an outside jumper, then I've got to hit it. If I have to go to the boards or play the point or whatever the case may be, then I've got to be prepared and go out and do it.

"When you're a senior, everyone looks at it as your most important year," continued Hicks. "But by just being a senior, that means that Donald and I have to lead by example."

Combined with co-captain Donald Royal's team-leading 15.6 points per game, these two seniors will be missed by next year's team. But some other people might welcome the two players in the basketball world.

Will Hicks play in the NBA?

"Obviously, that's hard to say right now," says Phelps.

"Guards are more abundant in the NBA right now. A lot of teams go with the one guard and four players, so that makes it a lot tougher.

"I'm just going on what the NBA guys have told me, and they're all in love with Royal. They think they can use him as a small forward or even a guard."

Royal also sees Hicks' emergence as a matter of time.

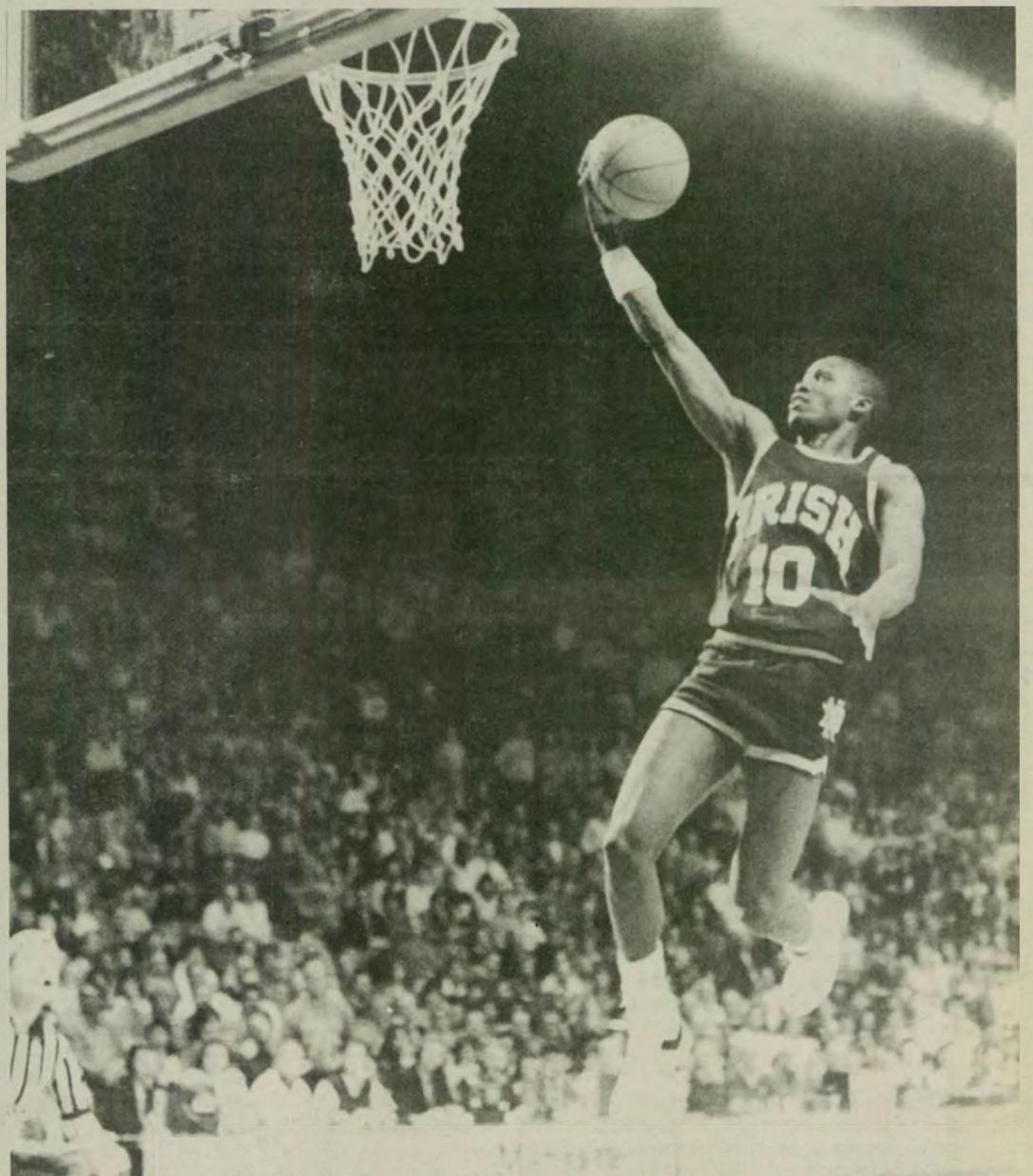
"It's a matter of just waiting your turn," said Royal. "With David's accident, it was a difficult situation for him to get in. But he made the best out of it. He went out and proved it."

For Hicks, the story of his season is still being written. There's still more one step to take before it's all over.

"Our goal at the beginning of the season was to go as far as we can in the tournament - and that's a national championship," said Hicks. "If we play hard and do what we have to do, we can capture the dream."



Scott Hicks



Robert Jones

Hick's soaring drives and rebounds have been a hallmark of his four years in an Irish uniform

NCAA Tournament Lists

How Conference Teams Have Fared In Men's NCAA Basketball Tournament NCAA Division One, 1980-1986

	Wins	Losses	Percentage
Atlantic Coast	66	31	.680
Big East	53	30	.639
Southeastern	38	28	.576
Big Ten	37	31	.544
Metro	30	13	.698
Big Eight	24	20	.545
Southwest	20	15	.571
Sun Belt	12	20	.375
PAC-10	11	19	.367
Atlantic Ten	10	11	.476
Western Athletic	10	12	.455

SOURCE: NCAA NEWS

Observer Graphic/Geoffrey Sauer

Most Consecutive Seasons In NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament Division I, current through 1985-1986

North Carolina	12 years
(one title, 1982)	
Georgetown	8 years
(one title, 1984)	
Kentucky	7 years
Villanova	7 years
(one title, 1985)	
Alabama-Birmingham	6 years
Alabama	5 years
North Carolina A&T	5 years
St. John's	5 years

SOURCE: NCAA and SPS Research

Observer Graphic/Geoffrey Sauer

Rivers' recovery spurs ND wins over top-ranked foes

continued from page 1

"It was frustrating, but it wasn't frustrating to the point where I would dwell on it because I was coming from what I had experienced in the accident," says Rivers. "I sort of laughed at the minor injuries. I didn't really put that much emphasis on them because I had come back from near death. An ankle injury isn't that bad."

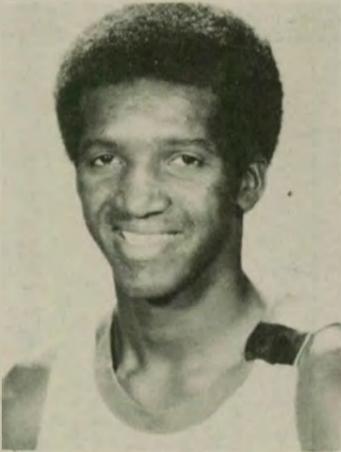
As if Rivers' basketball frustrations weren't enough, the University announced that it was converting River's residence hall, Howard, into a women's dormitory in the fall of 1987.

"I think they should have let us know a year in advance, but that's the way they did it," commented Rivers of the decision. "I really didn't feed into that much. I had other things to occupy my time. I was disappointed because I liked living in Howard. I've created some relationships with certain people around, and now we're going to be broken up because of that. That's the administration. I'm not going to get involved in that."

But when the final week in January began, the Irish began to heat up. They beat Dayton and

Marquette to close out that month and then began a February unlike any other in Notre Dame history. On Feb. 1, the Irish defeated top-ranked North Carolina. Rivers was key in the win, coming up with jumpers in clutch situations, usually with the Tar Heels' Ranzino Smith in his face, in leading the Irish to their 60-58 upset.

"(The North Carolina win) was



David Rivers

very big because I had lost to them the last two years," recalls Rivers. "I wanted to win. My father was up here for the first time to see me play. I knew it was going to be a moment for him and myself. I really wanted that one pretty

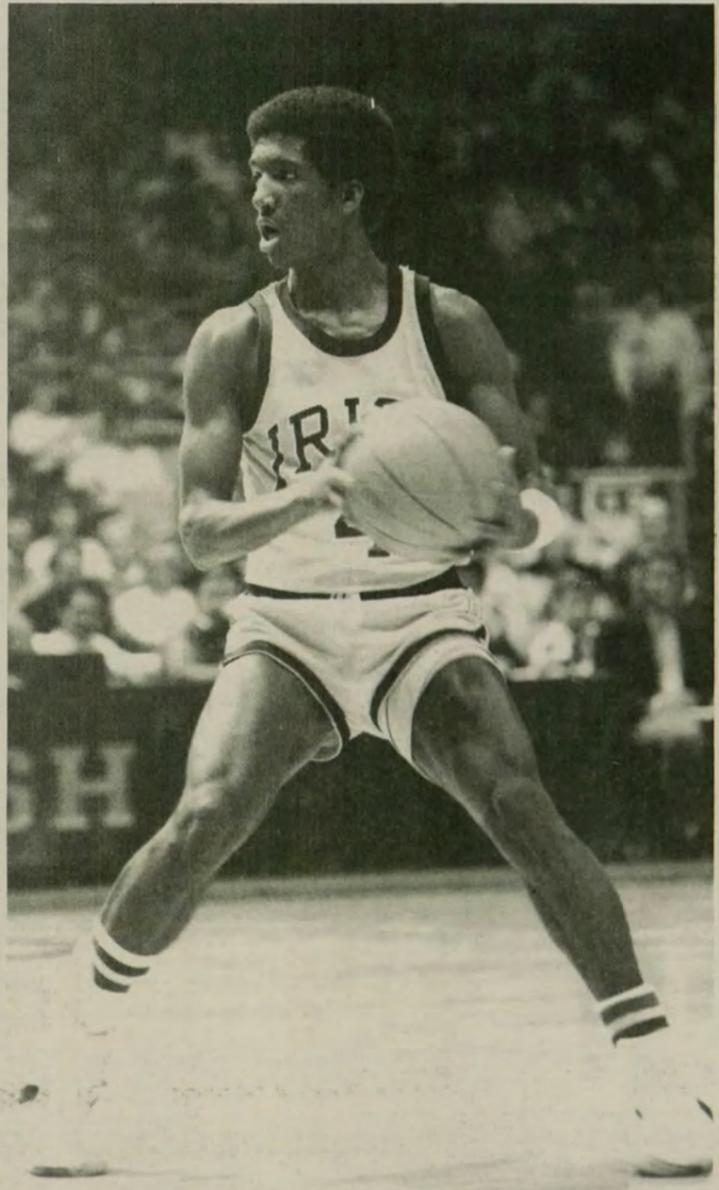
bad. To go out, be able to play and come up with the victory was a very special moment."

The Irish dropped two close games on the road the following weekend, but haven't lost

"When I was having a crisis, everyone was there for me. It helps out a lot because you know there are people out there pulling for you."
- David Rivers

since. Upsets of Duke and DePaul on the ACC court followed, as did road victories over Utah, Marquette and Dayton. Rivers had 21 at Marquette and 22 in a home win over Miami. In a season once filled with adversity, Rivers bounced back to average 14.7 points per contest and hand out 153 assists - the second-highest season total in Notre Dame history. It has been a tough season for Rivers, but now he looks back on it in a way that also looks ahead to the NCAA Tournament.

"Well . . . I've always been taught to expect the unexpected."



Greg Kohs

Rivers fought back to resume his role as Notre Dame's floor leader - "This was what it was all for."

Blue Raiders not awed by Irish

By DENNIS CORRIGAN
Sports Editor

It will probably be a fun role to be the underdog."

the starting five all have double-figure scoring averages.

CHARLOTTE, N.C. - When Notre Dame takes to the court Thursday afternoon to face the Blue Raiders of Middle Tennessee St., it will be facing a team it doesn't know much about and has nothing to lose.

According to Stewart, who has a record of 62-31 in three years at Middle Tennessee St., his squad will not bow out meekly.

"We don't want to be satisfied just being in the Tournament. We want to prove there is a reason why (the NCAA) put us there."

The Blue Raiders have plenty of ammunition. Senior guard Duane Washington keys their fast-paced attack. In addition to averaging 10.4 points a game himself, Washington had 248 assists on the season. With an assist total like that, it's easy to see why the rest of

"I don't think we'll be in awe," said Blue Raider head coach Bruce Stewart Sunday after he learned his squad would be facing the Irish. Instead, it should be a motivator for us. We will obviously be the underdog since they are the fifth seed. We've been the favorite in nearly every game we've played since Christmas.

Irish Statistics

PLAYER	G-S	MIN-AVG	FG(3P)-FGA	Through Sunday		PCT	REB	AVG	PF	A	BK	ST	TP	AVG
				PCT	FT-FTA									
Donald Royal	25-25	912-36.5	115-196	.587	160-195	.821	175	7.0	82	33	10	26	390	15.6
David Rivers	29-28	1059-36.5	147(14)-334	.440	119-142	.838	108	3.7	71	153	4	42	427	14.7
Scott Hicks	27-27	913-33.8	128(1)-263	.487	45-72	.625	114	4.2	67	56	9	33	302	11.2
Mark Stevenson	29-28	943-32.5	119(1)-254	.469	62-80	.775	112	3.9	39	44	4	14	301	10.4
Sean Connor	23-4	446-19.3	62(12)-132	.470	16-22	.727	44	1.9	35	18	1	8	152	6.6
Gary Voce	29-29	798-27.5	48-95	.505	39-53	.736	187	6.5	75	13	14	14	135	4.7
Jamere Jackson	25-0	251-10.0	21(5)-51	.412	14-22	.636	21	0.8	28	12	1	5	61	2.1
Scott Paddock	28-3	305-10.9	21-35	.600	7-15	.467	85	3.1	38	7	6	1	49	1.8
Joe Fredrick	23-1	124-5.4	14-26	.538	3-5	.600	6	0.3	23	6	0	5	31	1.3
Chris Nanni	7-0	7-1.0	0-2	.000	4-6	.667	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	4	0.6
Tony Jackson	20-0	52-2.6	3-5	.600	3-6	.500	9	0.5	14	0	1	1	9	0.5
Steve Nicgorski	8-0	8-1.0	1-6	.167	2-5	.400	4	0.5	1	0	0	1	4	0.5
Michael Smith	20-0	72-3.6	2-10	.200	4-8	.500	9	0.5	3	7	0	2	8	0.4
Team							89	3.1						
NOTRE DAME	29-29	5875-202	681(33)-1409	.483	478-631	.757	963	33.2	476	349	50	152	88739	64.6
OPPONENTS	29-29	5875-202	668(48)-1463	.457	316-461	.685	765	26.4	564	306	58	159	11700	58.6

NCAA Tournament Lists

Most Losses by NCAA Men's Division I Basketball Champion

Villanova	1985	25-10
North Carolina State	1983	26-10
Indiana	1981	26-9
Marquette	1977	25-7
Louisville	1986	32-7
Michigan State	1979	26-6
Kentucky	1958	23-6
City College of New York	1950	24-5
Oregon	1939	29-5

SOURCE: Modern Encyclopedia of Basketball Observer Graphic/Geoffrey Sauer

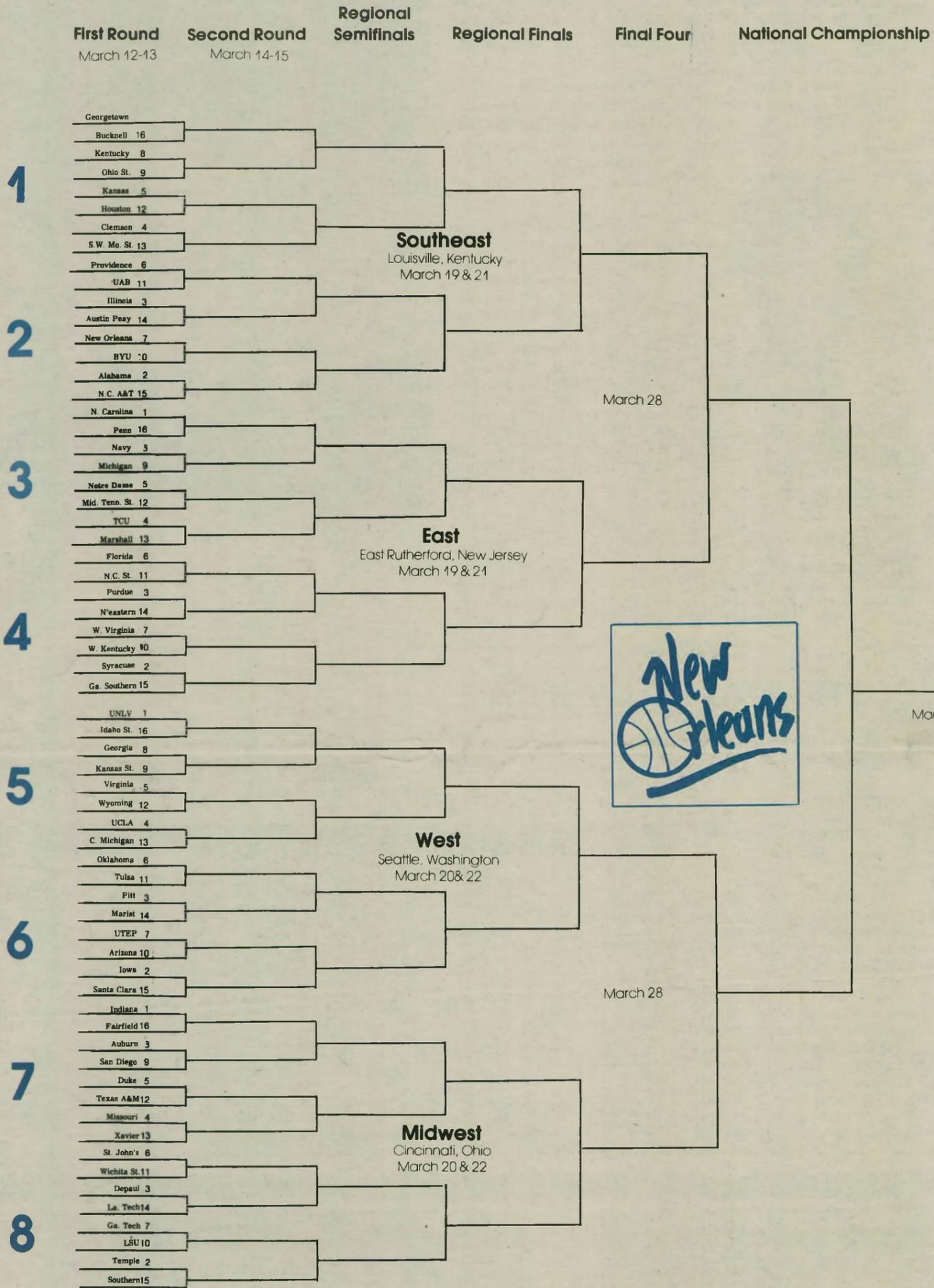
Only Centers Who Made Three Appearances In The NCAA Final Four

Jerry Lucas	Ohio State
(1960-1962)	
Paul Hogue	Cincinnati
(1961-1963)	
Rusty Clark	North Carolina
(1967-1969)	
Low Alcindor	UCLA
(1967-1969)	
Bill Walton	UCLA
(1972-1974)	
Akeem Olajuwon	Houston
(1982-1984)	
Patrick Ewing	Georgetown
(1982, 1984-1985)	

SOURCE: Modern Encyclopedia of Basketball and the Sporting News

Observer Graphic/Geoffrey Sauer

NCAA Pairings



First and second round sites

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1 Atlanta, Georgia
March 13 & 15 | 3 Charlotte, North Carolina
March 12 & 14 | 5 Salt Lake City, Utah
March 12 & 14 | 7 Indianapolis, Indiana
March 12 & 14 |
| 2 Birmingham, Alabama
March 12 & 14 | 4 Syracuse, New York
March 13 & 15 | 6 Tucson, Arizona
March 13 & 15 | 8 Chicago, Illinois
March 13 & 15 |