

# Duke heads into March Madness ranked No. 1 in AP poll

NEW YORK (AP) — Duke is the No. 1 seed in the NCAA Tournament and No. 1 in the final AP Top 25 of the regular season.

The Blue Devils received 50 first-place votes from a 57-person media panel in The Associated Press men's basketball poll released Monday, a day after they were named the top overall seed in the NCAA Tournament.

No. 2 Arizona received seven first-place votes, with Michigan, Florida and Houston rounding out the top five. The Wolverines, the betting favorite to win the national championship, did not receive a first-place vote in the poll. The final rankings will be released April 7, a day after the national championship game.

No. 8 Purdue jumped 10 spots back into the top 10 after beating Michigan 80-72 in the Big Ten tournament title game.

No. 9 Virginia moved up a spot for its highest ranking since reaching No. 2 in 2022-23. No. 10 St. John's also returned to the top 10 after blowing out UConn in the Big East title game.

Duke maintained the top spot after adding a second straight Atlantic Coast Conference tournament title to its regular-season title. The Blue Devils were No. 1 over the final four weeks of the regular season, extending their all-time record to 151



Duke celebrates winning the championship of the Atlantic Coast Conference tournament in an NCAA college basketball game in Charlotte, North Carolina on Saturday.

weeks at No. 1. Miami (Ohio)'s run in the AP Top 25 came to an end after its 87-83

loss to UMass in the Mid-American Conference Tournament. The RedHawks still made the NCAA

Tournament and will play SMU in the First Four Wednesday in Dayton, Ohio, about an hour's drive from

## Pirates

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No examination of Pick No. 9 is therefore particularly instructive, and given Griffin's early reviews, it's perhaps better to look at Pittsburgh's No. 1 picks, as the Pirates have only drafted two non-pitchers with the first pick in the entire history of the draft.

The first, Jeff King (1986), enjoyed a solid if unspectacular big-league career that spanned 11 sea-

sons with an average annual OPS of .749. Twice he knocked in 100 runs or more, once with the Pirates and once with the Royals. The second was Henry Davis, the first player chosen in 2021, whose bat remains mostly undetected in parts of three seasons. He's hit 15 homers since getting to the show in 2023, but he hit .167 in 87 games last summer and has a career OPS of .556. As of Friday, he was 0-for-spring training.

No one in or out of baseball can say with anything resembling certainty what kind of career Griffin is headed for, but at least one aspect of

the differing fates of King and Davis is sitting there screaming at the Pirates to this day. It's the essence of their dilemma. King arrived in Pittsburgh with 1,116 minor league at-bats. Davis got here after only 686. Griffin has 484.

Baseball's conventional wisdom has long held that a prospect is ready for a big-league promotion after he's had demonstrable success at Double A and/or Triple A and has between 1,000 and 1,500 minor league at-bats. But like everything else in a sport that seems to get more difficult for hitters every day, some hitters

are ready after 500, and most aren't after 5,000.

This spring, from the moment he started launching baseballs over Grapefruit League fences, Griffin has evidently looked ready. He's reportedly the first teenager with three spring training homers in at least 20 years.

"He's got a chance to have a really, really good, long career, and it's our job to do everything we can to support him in being in the best spot possible to do that," general manager Ben Cherington said last week. I thought the Pirates' job was to

their Oxford campus.

### Rising and falling

After the Boilermakers' big jump, No. 16 Vanderbilt climbed six places after reaching the SEC tournament title game.

No. 13 Illinois, No. 15 Nebraska and No. 20 Texas Tech had the biggest drops, each losing four places.

The Illini fell after blowing a 15-point lead in a 91-88 overtime loss to Wisconsin in the Big Ten Tournament. The Red Raiders dropped after being blown out by Iowa State in the Big 12 Tournament. The Cornhuskers lost by 16 to Purdue.

### In and out

Miami (Ohio) was the only team to drop out of this week's poll.

The other Miami, the one in Florida, moved into the poll at No. 23 after reaching the ACC tournament semifinals. The Hurricanes are a No. 7 seed in the NCAA Tournament West Region, but got a tough draw, facing No. 10 Missouri in St. Louis, about 90 minutes from the Tigers' campus.

### Conference watch

The Big Ten has six ranked teams while the Big 12, SEC and ACC have five apiece. The Big 12 has three of the top six.

The Big East and West Coast have two ranked teams each.

win baseball games, but wait ... "Obviously," the GM went on, "we want to try to marry that with him helping the Pirates win as many games as possible, too. That will continue to guide us."

Guide us where he didn't say, but the considerations go far, far beyond some number of minor league at-bats. Those considerations are financial, emotional, psychological, the whole bit.

I don't know what the Pirates should do with Griffin. It's baseball. Nobody knows. There are only guessers and liars.

## THE DAILY SCOREBOARD

### NHL STANDINGS

Table with columns for Eastern Conference (Atlantic, Metropolitan, Central, Western) and Western Conference, listing teams, GP, W, L, OT, Pts, GF, GA.

### MLB SPRING TRAINING GLANCE

Table with columns for American League (W, L, Pet) and National League (W, L, Pet), listing teams and their records.

### NCAA TOURNAMENT GLANCE

Table listing NCAA Tournament First Four, East Regional, South Regional, and Midwest Regional games with dates and times.

### WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Table listing Women's College Basketball First Four, Sacramento 2, and Sacramento 4 games with dates and times.

### SPORTS SCENE

Table listing Sports Scene events including WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18 SCHOLASTIC SOFTBALL, FRIDAY, MARCH 20 SCHOLASTIC BASEBALL, and SATURDAY, MARCH 21 SCHOLASTIC BASEBALL.

### SPORTS ON TV

Table listing Sports on TV events including FOX — 2026 World Baseball Classic, ESPN2 — NIT Tournament, and ESPN — NCAA Tournament.

### PIRATES BOXSCORE

Pirates Boxscore table for Minnesota 5, Pittsburgh 1, showing individual player stats (ab, r, h, bi, ab, r, h, bi) and totals.

### THIS DATE IN SPORTS

March 17 1897 — Bob Fitzsimmons knocks out Jim Corbett in the 14th round to win the world heavyweight title in Carson City, Nev. It's the first boxing match photographed by a motion picture camera.

### SUNDAY'S GAMES

Houston 1, Miami 0 Tampa Bay 6, Pittsburgh 1 Boston 7, Minnesota 2 Detroit 12, N.Y. Yankees (ss) 1 Atlanta 1, Phila. 0 St. Louis 6, Washington 3 N.Y. Mets 8, Toronto 1, 6 innings L.A. Dodgers (ss) 5, Texas 3 Kansas City 10, Chicago White Sox 4 Cleveland 12, Athletics 6 San Francisco 7, Milwaukee 1 L.A. Dodgers 8 N.Y. Angels 6, Colorado 5 Seattle 6, Cincinnati 3 San Diego 4, Arizona 4 Baltimore vs N.Y. Yankees (ss) at Sarasota, Fla., canc.

### MONDAY'S GAMES

Atlanta 11, Tampa Bay 2 Minnesota 5, Pittsburgh 1 Detroit 13, Phila. 6 Toronto 5, Miami 4, 6 innings Athletics 3, L.A. Angels 0 Milwaukee 24, L.A. Dodgers 9 San Diego 3, San Francisco 1 Arizona 11, Cincinnati 6 Baltimore vs Boston at Sarasota, Fla., canc. N.Y. Mets vs Washington, late Texas vs Chicago White Sox, late Cleveland vs Chicago Cubs, late

### TUESDAY'S GAMES

Boston vs Atlanta at Fort Myers, Fla., 1:05 p.m. Detroit vs Baltimore at Lakeland, Fla., 1:05 p.m. Phila. vs Minnesota at Clearwater, Fla., 1:05 p.m. Pittsburgh vs Houston at Bradenton, Fla., 1:05 p.m. Tampa Bay vs N.Y. Yankees at Port Charlotte, Fla., 1:05 p.m. Washington vs St. Louis at West Palm Beach, Fla., 1:05 p.m. Miami vs N.Y. Mets at Jupiter, Fla., 1:10 p.m. Chicago White Sox vs Athletics at Phoenix, 4:05 p.m. Colorado vs Seattle (ss) at Scottsdale, Ariz., 4:10 p.m. Seattle (ss) vs San Diego at Peoria, Ariz., 4:10 p.m. Chicago Cubs vs L.A. Angels at Mesa, Ariz., 9:05 p.m. Cincinnati vs Cleveland at Goodyear, Ariz., 9:05 p.m. Kansas City vs L.A. Dodgers at Surprise, Ariz., 9:05 p.m.

### WEDNESDAY'S GAMES

N.Y. Yankees vs Boston at Tampa, Fla., 1:05 p.m. St. Louis vs Houston at Jupiter, Fla., 1:05 p.m. Atlanta vs Phila. at North Port, Fla., 1:07 p.m. Toronto vs Baltimore at Dunedin, Fla., 1:07 p.m. Cincinnati (ss) vs Colorado at Goodyear, Ariz., 4:05 p.m. L.A. Dodgers vs San Francisco at Phoenix, 4:05 p.m. L.A. Angels (ss) vs Cincinnati (ss) at Tempe, Ariz., 4:10 p.m. Milwaukee (ss) vs L.A. Angels (ss) at Phoenix, 4:10 p.m. Seattle vs Milwaukee (ss) at Peoria, Ariz., 4:10 p.m. Arizona vs Chicago Cubs at Scottsdale, Ariz., 4:10 p.m. Pittsburgh vs Detroit at Bradenton, Fla., 6:05 p.m. Washington vs Miami at West Palm Beach, Fla., 6:05 p.m. Texas vs Kansas City at Surprise, Ariz., 9:05 p.m.

### THURSDAY'S GAMES

Arizona (32-2) vs. L.J.U. Sharks (24-10), 1:35 p.m. Villanova (24-8) vs. Utah St. (28-6), 4:10 p.m. At Enterprise Center St. Louis Kentucky (21-13) vs. Santa Clara (26-8), 12:15 p.m. Iowa St. (27-7) vs. Tenn. St. (23-9), 2:50 p.m. WEST REGIONAL First Round Friday, March 20 At KeyBank Center Buffalo, N.Y. Michigan (31-3) vs. Howard-UMBC winner, 7:10 p.m. Georgia (22-10) vs. Saint Louis (28-5), 9:45 p.m. Friday, March 20 At Benchmark International Arena Tampa, Fla. Texas Tech (22-10) vs. Akron (29-5), 12:40 p.m. Alabama (23-9) vs. Hofstra (24-10), 3:15 p.m. At Xfinity Mobile Arena Phila. Tennessee (22-11) vs. SMU-Miami (Ohio) winner, 4:25 p.m. Virginia (29-5) vs. Wright St. (23-11), 1:50 p.m. At Enterprise Center St. Louis Kentucky (21-13) vs. Santa Clara (26-8), 12:15 p.m. Iowa St. (27-7) vs. Tenn. St. (23-9), 2:50 p.m.

### FRIDAY'S GAMES

Florida (26-7) vs. Lehigh-Prairie View winner, 9:25 p.m. Clemson (24-10) vs. Iowa (21-12), 6:50 p.m. Thursday, March 19 At Pajonk Center Oklahoma City Vanderbilt (26-8) vs. McNeese St. (28-5), 3:15 p.m. Nebraska (26-6) vs. Troy (22-11), 12:40 p.m. At Bon Secours Wellness Arena Greenville, S.C. North Carolina (24-8) vs. VCU (27-7), 6:50 p.m. Illinois (24-8) vs. Penn (18-11), 9:25 p.m. At Pajonk Center Oklahoma City Saint Mary's (Cal.) (27-5) vs. Texas A&M (21-11), 7:35 p.m. Houston (28-6) vs. Idaho (21-14), 10:10 p.m.

### SATURDAY'S GAMES

UCLA (23-11) vs. UCF (21-11), 7:25 p.m. UConn (29-5) vs. Furman (22-12), 10 p.m. SOUTH REGIONAL First Round Friday, March 20 At Benchmark International Arena Tampa, Fla. Florida (26-7) vs. Lehigh-Prairie View winner, 9:25 p.m. Clemson (24-10) vs. Iowa (21-12), 6:50 p.m. Thursday, March 19 At Pajonk Center Oklahoma City Vanderbilt (26-8) vs. McNeese St. (28-5), 3:15 p.m. Nebraska (26-6) vs. Troy (22-11), 12:40 p.m. At Bon Secours Wellness Arena Greenville, S.C. North Carolina (24-8) vs. VCU (27-7), 6:50 p.m. Illinois (24-8) vs. Penn (18-11), 9:25 p.m. At Pajonk Center Oklahoma City Saint Mary's (Cal.) (27-5) vs. Texas A&M (21-11), 7:35 p.m. Houston (28-6) vs. Idaho (21-14), 10:10 p.m. MIDWEST REGIONAL First Round Thursday, March 19 At KeyBank Center Buffalo, N.Y. Michigan (31-3) vs. Howard-UMBC winner, 7:10 p.m. Georgia (22-10) vs. Saint Louis (28-5), 9:45 p.m. Friday, March 20 At Benchmark International Arena Tampa, Fla. Texas Tech (22-10) vs. Akron (29-5), 12:40 p.m. Alabama (23-9) vs. Hofstra (24-10), 3:15 p.m. At Xfinity Mobile Arena Phila. Tennessee (22-11) vs. SMU-Miami (Ohio) winner, 4:25 p.m. Virginia (29-5) vs. Wright St. (23-11), 1:50 p.m. At Enterprise Center St. Louis Kentucky (21-13) vs. Santa Clara (26-8), 12:15 p.m. Iowa St. (27-7) vs. Tenn. St. (23-9), 2:50 p.m. WEST REGIONAL First Round Friday, March 20 At Viejas Arena San Diego Arizona (32-2) vs. L.J.U. Sharks (24-10), 1:35 p.m. Villanova (24-8) vs. Utah St. (28-6), 4:10 p.m. At Enterprise Center St. Louis Miami (25-8) vs. Missouri (20-12), 10:10 p.m. Purdue (27-8) vs. Queens University Royals (21-13), 7:35 p.m. Thursday, March 19 At Moda Center Portland, Ore. Wisconsin (24-10) vs. High Point (30-4), 1:50 p.m. Arkansas (26-8) vs. Hawaii (24-8), 4:25 p.m. BYU (23-11) vs. NC State-Texas winner, 7:25 p.m. Gonzaga (30-3) vs. Kennesaw St. (21-13), 10 p.m. FINAL FOUR At Lucas Oil Stadium Indianapolis National Semifinals Saturday, April 4 TBD vs. TBD, TBA TBD vs. TBD, TBA National Championship Monday, April 6 Semifinal winners, TBA