

Gonzaga Bulldogs looking for history this March Madness

By **Robert Belardi**

This could be one of the greatest NCAA teams ever assembled.

The Gonzaga Bulldogs went 26-0 this year and will look to be the first undefeated team to win the national title since the 1976 Indiana Hoosiers.

Since the Hoosiers, only four teams walked into college basketball's most prestigious competition and failed to deliver: Larry Bird's 1978-1979 Indiana State Sycamores, 1990-1991 UNLV Runnin' Rebels, Toronto Raptors guard Fred Van Vleet's 2013-2014 Wichita State Shockers and the 2014-2015 Kentucky Wildcats.

The Zags surely wouldn't want to be the fifth name on this list. Their last 22 games would likely cement another argument that is indicative of what kind of powerhouse of a team this is.

According to ESPN Stats and Info, the Zags won 22 games in a row by 10 or more points. They became the only Div. 1 team over the past 60 seasons to accomplish this. No wonder they're currently set at +200 odds to win the title. With Duke and Kentucky both out of the tournament for the first time since 1976, there the Bulldogs have an even better chance.

Their domination is the overall picture and it doesn't even account for the small anecdote within. The best part of this all is a Canadian is on the roster.

Aurora native Andrew Nembhard transferred to the Bulldogs from the Florida Gators last season.

Initially it was expected that Nembhard would miss his first year with the team due to NCAA rules. However, just last January the former SEC All-Freshman in 2018/2019 sent in a waiver and it was approved by the NCAA before the start of the season.

The timing couldn't have been more perfect.

The 6-foot-5-point guard has had another exceptional season in one of the best backcourts in the NCAA. Nembhard has averaged 9.2 points, 4.2 assists and 2.4 rebounds a game. He is currently shooting 80.5 per cent from the line and is 34.2 per cent from beyond the arc.

Along with Jalen Suggs and Joel Ayayi, the Zags will have a triple-threat at the guard position that will be quite difficult to counter-punch.

In everyone's NCAA brackets this year, it's truly difficult not to go with the Bulldogs as the eventual winner. Behind the Zags in the betting odds are Baylor (+600), Michigan (+600), Illinois (+700) and Iowa (+1600), as per Sporting News.

The First Four is set to take place March 18 as the first game features Texas Southern against Mount St. Mary's at 5:10 p.m. EST.

The Bulldogs will take on the winner of Norfolk State and Appalachian State on March 20 to kick off their tournament.