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NCR Bracket update: Preview of the women's tourney and men's first-rd recap

Brian Roewe | Mar. 17, 2012 NCR Today

The women?s side of the madness kicks off today, with nine Catholic schools having punched their tickets to the big dance.

Those include Creighton University, DePaul University, University of Dayton, Gonzaga University, the University of Norte Dame, Sacred Heart University, St. Bonaventure University and St. John?s University.

It?s worthy to note five schools ? Creighton, Georgetown, Gonzaga, Notre Dame and St. Bonaventure ? sent both their men?s and women?s basketball teams to their respective tournaments.

As we filled out the left side of our bracket, tough decisions came quickly, with St. John?s and Creighton facing one another in the first round, and a projected Georgetown-Sacred Heart game in the second round.

On the other side, Gonzaga has an easy road to our Final Four, being the only Catholic school in the Kingston, R.I., region. Other teams we have joining the Bulldogs are DePaul, Notre Dame and St. John?s.

In a matchup of St. John?s and Notre Dame in Denver, we predict the Red Storm of St. John?s will reach the summit and take the title.

Over at the men?s tournament, the second round ended Friday night, with upsets taking down a few top teams, as well as some of the Catholic schools. Five Catholic schools ? Detroit Mercy, Loyola-Maryland, Notre Dame, St. Bonaventure and St. Mary?s ? each lost their game over the past two days.

Looking at our bracket, we have five teams left in the dance. Notre Dame?s loss hurt us doubly, as we had the Irish advancing to the Final Four. But the Musketeers of Jesuit-run Xavier University ? who we erroneously did not pick to win ? had other plans, and defeated Norte Dame by four last night.

It could be turbulent waters for the remaining schools, with Creighton, Gonzaga and Saint Louis all facing #1 or #2 seeds in their next matchup.

But as Friday night showed, anything can happen, and that?s why we?ll continue watching both tournaments this weekend as the games continue.

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