

Thursday, March 22 – SWEET 16

2 Star Best Bet

****Florida (+2) over Marquette**

Both of these teams have covered the spread in both of their NCAA tournament games but Florida covered in each game by 20 points or more and the Gators apply to a 21-4 ATS round 3 situation. My ratings also favor the Gators by ½ a point in this game (with a total of 148 ½ points) and I'll take Florida in a 2-Star Best Bet at -1 or better.

2 Star Best Bet

****Syracuse (-3) over Wisconsin**

Syracuse struggled in their opening round game against NC Asheville (won by only 7 as a 15 point favorite) without shot blocking C Fab Melo (2.9 blocks per game), but that had more to do with randomly poor 3-point shooting (5 for 23). The Orange then beat a good Kansas State team by 16 points, but that was influenced by positive 3-point shooting variance (6 for 9 while Kansas State was just 4 for 17). Overall, Syracuse has been a bit worse in 5 games this season without Melo after adjusting for variance and my ratings favor the Orange by just 1 ½ points without him (by 2 ½ points using all games) with a total of 119 ½ points. While the value appears to favor Wisconsin the situation strongly favors Syracuse. The Badgers apply to a 1-22 ATS round 3 situation while Syracuse applies to a 43-13-2 ATS situation.

I'll TAKE Syracuse at -4 or less.

Opinion

Ohio State (-7 ½) vs Cincinnati

Cincinnati has covered the spread in 8 of their last 9 games and the Bearcats have a tendency to play relatively better against better teams. Ohio State's only weakness is their poor 3-point shooting but the Buckeyes' superior interior game should work against a good, but not great Cincy interior defense (64th in 2 point defensive percentage). My ratings favor Ohio State by 8 ½ points (with a total of 130 ½ points), but my match up analysis favors the Buckeyes by 7 points – so a line of 7 ½ or 8 points seems right. There are no significant situations favoring either team and this game isn't worth playing either way.

Opinion

Michigan State (-5) vs Louisville

Two of the best 5 defensive teams in the nation square off in this game but Michigan State has a better offensive team and my ratings favor the Spartans by 6 points in this game (with a total of 125 points). Michigan State does apply to a 5-16 ATS round 3 situation and while that angle isn't very strong it's enough to balance out the point of line value on the side of the Spartans. I'll pass on this game.