

Saturday, March 24 – FINAL 8

1 STAR BEST BET

***Ohio State (-3) over Syracuse**

This is not a particularly good match up for Ohio State since the Buckeyes' weakness is their 3-point shooting (33.3%) and the Syracuse zone forces teams to take more 3-pointers. Scoring inside against the Orange is easier without suspended Fab Melo patrolling the paint and Ohio State is a very efficient 2-point shooting team (53.6%) that will dominate the rebounding stats in this game, so the Buckeyes should be able to win this game even without good 3-point shooting. My ratings favor Ohio State by 3 ½ points (with a total of 136 ½ points) and the Buckeyes apply to a solid 37-14-2 ATS round 4 situation.

2 STAR BEST BET

****Louisville (+1 ½) over Florida**

This game comes down to Louisville's defense, which is now the highest rated in the nation, against Florida's offense, which is #3 in compensated efficiency (points per possession). I think the Cardinals will win that battle. Louisville's defense is relatively better against better offensive teams while Florida's offense is slightly worse, relatively, against better defensive teams. Louisville's domination of Michigan State was certainly impressive and teams that win as an underdog of 4 points or more in the Sweet 16 are 19-3 ATS in their Elite 8 game. My ratings using all games would favor Florida by 2 points but using games for each team against NCAA Tournament caliber opposition would make this game a pick and my match-up analysis, which takes into account Louisville's better defense against better offensive teams, favors the Cardinals by 2 points (with a total of 129 ½ points). Florida is playing better than any team so far in the NCAA Tournament but Louisville looks like a tough match up for the Gators.