

Saturday, March 31-FINAL FOUR

1 Star Best Bet

***Louisville (+9) over Kentucky**

Louisville is the best defensive team in the nation (based on compensated points per possession allowed) and the Cardinals held Kentucky to 29.8% shooting in a close 7 point loss at Kentucky earlier this season. Louisville had trouble offensively in that game too (32.2%) and that will probably be the case in this game too, but if the Cardinals can lose by only 7 points in Lexington then they can certainly compete in this game on a neutral floor. Louisville enters the Final Four with an 8 game winning streak (7 of those wins were against NCAA tournament teams) and the Cardinals have played relatively better against better teams this season. My ratings only favor Kentucky by 6 ½ points in this game, so the line is certainly inflated. My math model projects 133 total points, so I suppose I'll lean with the under.

1 Star Best Bet

***Kansas (+2 ½) over Ohio St.**

Ohio State isn't really equipped to take advantage of Kansas' defensive weakness, which is defending the 3-point arc. Kansas allowed a mediocre 33.7% from beyond the arc and the Jayhawks are #1 in the nation in 2-point percentage defense at 40.0%. Ohio State only makes 33.2% of their 3-pointers and the Buckeyes don't take a lot of threes so their offense doesn't particularly match up well. However, Ohio State's overall defense is #2 in the nation in compensated defensive efficiency and Kansas is not as good offensively as the Buckeyes are, so the Jayhawks will probably struggle to score too. My ratings favor Ohio State by 1 point with a total of 135 points.