

Madness: The Ten Most Memorable NCAA Basketball Finals

College basketball fans eagerly await the annual NCAA Basketball Tournament, lovingly referred to as "March Madness," where the best teams compete for dominance on the court and a chance to be crowned champions. Over the years, this tournament has provided us with countless unforgettable moments and thrilling finishes. In this article, we dive into the archives to relive the ten most memorable NCAA Basketball Finals ever played.

1. The Miracle on Ice - 1983

Who could forget the 1983 NCAA Championship game between the North Carolina State Wolfpack and the heavily favored Houston Cougars? With just seconds left on the clock and down by one, Wolfpack's Lorenzo Charles grabbed a missed shot and slammed it home at the buzzer, securing an improbable victory for N.C. State. The underdog triumphed, and the world witnessed one of the greatest upsets in college basketball history.

2. The Villanova Dream - 1985

In 1985, the eighth-seeded Villanova Wildcats stunned the basketball world by knocking off the mighty Georgetown Hoyas, who were led by their star center Patrick Ewing. The Wildcats played a perfect game, shooting an incredible 79% from the field, and hit clutch shots throughout the contest. Their remarkable performance earned them their first-ever NCAA Championship in stunning fashion.

Madness: The Ten Most Memorable NCAA Basketball Finals by Karl Kroeger (Kindle Edition)



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Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 247 pages
X-Ray for textbooks : Enabled



3. The Rivalry Renewed - 1993

The 1993 NCAA Championship game pitted two legendary programs against each other: the North Carolina Tar Heels and the Michigan Wolverines. With Chris Webber leading the charge for Michigan, the game remained close until the final minutes. However, a critical timeout called by Webber with no timeouts remaining sealed North Carolina's victory, adding another chapter to one of the most heated rivalries in college basketball history.

4. The One-Man Show - 1987

Larry Bird's Indiana State Sycamores matched up against Earvin "Magic" Johnson's Michigan State Spartans in the 1979 NCAA Championship game, garnering tremendous excitement. Magic Johnson put on a dazzling performance, scoring 24 points, grabbing seven rebounds, and dishing out five assists. Johnson's stellar play guided Michigan State to victory, showcasing why he would become one of the greatest players in NBA history.

5. The Cinderella Story - 1983

In 1983, the underdog NC State Wolfpack made their second appearance on this list with their incredible run to the NCAA Championship game against the heavily

favored Houston Cougars. Led by coach Jim Valvano, the Wolfpack pulled off upset after upset, including defeating the top-seeded Virginia Cavaliers in the Final Four. With Lorenzo Charles' last-second heroics, they cemented their place as one of the greatest underdog stories in sports history.

6. The Shot Heard Around the World - 2016

In the 2016 NCAA Championship game, the Villanova Wildcats and North Carolina Tar Heels engaged in a back-and-forth battle that came down to the final seconds. With the score tied, Wildcats' Kris Jenkins calmly drained a three-point shot at the buzzer, securing the championship for Villanova and leaving fans awestruck. The dramatic finish instantly carved out a place in basketball lore, solidifying Jenkins' status as a clutch performer.

7. The Unforgettable Upset - 1966

The Texas Western Miners made history in the 1966 NCAA Championship game, facing off against the powerhouse Kentucky Wildcats coached by the legendary Adolph Rupp. In a time when racial tensions ran high, Texas Western fielded the first all-black starting lineup in tournament history. The Miners went on to defeat Kentucky, becoming the first team to win the championship with an all-black starting lineup, marking a significant moment for racial equality.

8. The Revenge Game - 1989

The 1989 NCAA Championship featured a rematch between the Michigan Wolverines and the Seton Hall Pirates. A year prior, Seton Hall had narrowly lost to Michigan in the championship game. This time, they sought revenge. The game went into overtime, with Michigan eventually prevailing in a nail-biting finish. The rematch provided basketball fans with intense drama and showcased the passion that drives these players to give their all.

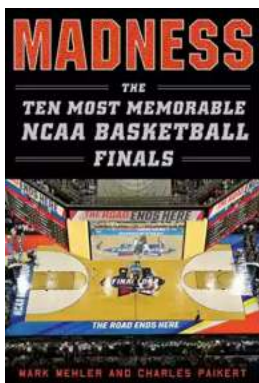
9. The Battling Blue Devils - 2010

The 2010 NCAA Championship game showcased two powerhouse programs: the Duke Blue Devils and the Butler Bulldogs. Butler, an underdog with a remarkable run, kept the game close until the final moments. With the clock ticking down, Butler's Gordon Hayward launched a last-second desperation shot that narrowly missed the mark, giving Duke a hard-fought victory. The game exemplified the thrill of March Madness, where never-say-die underdogs can come agonizingly close to pulling off the upset.

10. The Georgetown and Villanova Showdown - 1982

In 1982, the Georgetown Hoyas, led by Patrick Ewing, faced Villanova Wildcats in the championship game. Villanova executed a flawless game plan, shooting 78.6% from the field, a record that still stands today. The Wildcats' stellar performance prevented the highly talented Georgetown team from coming back and secured their first NCAA Championship in a display of excellence and determination.

These ten memorable NCAA Basketball Finals serve as a reminder of the passion, intensity, and unpredictability that make March Madness the incredible event it is today. From iconic shots to remarkable upsets, these games have left an indelible mark on college basketball history, making us fall in love with the tournament year after year.



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The annual NCAA Basketball Tournament, which has become known as “March Madness” has emerged as a major sports event, matched only by the Super Bowl and the Olympics. In Madness, Mark Mehler and Charles Paikert tell the stories behind the ten most compelling and memorable championship games in tournament history, from North Carolina’s triple-overtime victory over Wilt Chamberlain’s Kansas Wildcats in 1957 to Duke’s heart stopping victory over underdog Butler in 2010. As a bonus, five more games that just missed the cut are also examined. Madness goes beyond the games to tell the the backstories of these classics, each entirely unique unto itself. For example, Jim Valvano taking his impossible dream of a national title and making it come true for the 1983 North Carolina State Wolfpack; Rollie Massimino turning spaghetti and clam sauce into inspiration for his underachieving 1985 Villanova team; and Magic Johnson and Larry Bird, breaking down in tears while taking a Broadway curtain call in front of a wildly-applauding audience who two hours earlier didn't know who these two guys were decades after their head-to-head matchup in 1979. Some of these stories also resonate far beyond the basketball court, including the 1966 triumph by the Texas Western Miners, which helped chisel away the college basketball color line and stamped their victory as "Glory Road." Over sixty years of college basketball history is brought to life in this must-have for all basketball fans.



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