

So the NCAA basketball season is now officially over. We were officially blessed with perhaps the most boring and uneventful tournament in memory. ♦ The final between North Carolina and Michigan State was, well ... a yawner to say the least. With that said though, congratulations to UNC for a well-coached and well-played game. It was the next closest thing to a modern-day hoops clinic.

March Madness is almost always just that - madness. It has, over the years, served us with some fine examples of sportsmanship, camaraderie, "shining moments", humanity, and, oh yes, great basketball. But this year - just wasn't the same. Perhaps there is no coincidence that this year gave us the fewest mid-major teams in the tournament in the past 4 or 5 years. We didn't really have a Davidson to remind us that the Big Dance can be a modern day David-vs-Goliath on the hardwood. There were certainly some upsets, and some great games. But in general, all was a little disappointing. The Beasts from the Big East ... failed to impress. The Big 12, the second best conference in the country ... went down with barely a whimper. Memphis looked like a Conference USA team (oh right, they are!). And then there we had the Texas Longhorns - who, if they'd only been able to hit a free throw, would have put Duke out of their misery before Villanova did. Speaking of my beloved Longhorns, there are some good points to take away from the tournament. Texas played 2 Final Four teams during the regular season - Michigan State and Villanova. Back in December, they actually put up a 1 - 1 record against these teams - and at neutral sites. If we go back to the Elite Eight, Texas was 2 - 3 overall ... beating and losing to Oklahoma, and losing to Missouri. Don't forget that Oklahoma beat Syracuse, and Missouri beat Memphis. I guess we have to take all of this with the proverbial grain of salt. But, it shows that the program is now in a totally different place - for fans and for players. Now, we've come to expect greatness from the program - and with good reason. Rick Barnes has developed one of the finest programs in the nation. But before we leave the 2008 - 2009 season it would only be appropriate to make note of the insanity that resides north of the Red River ... that humble educational institution that they call the University of Oklahoma. We've all heard the conspiracy theories about Blake Griffin's concussion suffered in a game against the Horns on February 21. On review of the video, nobody seems to be able to isolate exactly when this happened. No replays, no nothing. Looks like somehow Blake got hit in the head without anyone noticing it. Blake's a big lad, and as he's one of the top 2 or 3 players in the country, the camera tends to spend a lot of time following him. Yet still - no replays, no video, no reports, nada. Now we're getting silliness from Tulsa World columnist Dave Sittler, who has called the game the ["Texas Blakejaw Massacre"](http://www.tulsaworld.com/sports/article.aspx?subjectid=202&articleid=20090407?202?B1?DETROI771344&archive=yes "OU Conspiracy Theories"). He's gone so far as to say that if it wasn't for that darn concussion, "the Sooners could have easily been in Monday night's NCAA national championship game". Well, Dave, perhaps the air is a little rarified up there in Tulsa. Or perhaps you don't get the same TV coverage that we get here in Austin. It seems to me that Blake had, oh, a month to recover. Sure, they ended up with a number 2 seed in the South region - but let's not forget that the number one seed in their region was ... North Carolina. So let's imagine that they were a number one seed elsewhere ... ♦ perhaps the West (probably the best they would

have done since there was so much love for the other number one seeds (Louisville, Pittsburgh, and North Carolina). It looks to me like a #1 OU would have ended up playing ... #3 Missouri. Lest we forget, Oklahoma lost to Missouri 73 - 64. I am sure that Dave would remind us that the loss was in the "post-Massacre" episode as the loss occurred March 4. </p> <p> If OU was truly that good, and should have advanced in the tournament, then they should have had no problem disposing of UNC to advance to the Final Four. Dave, unless you missed it, Oklahoma failed to take the floor let alone put up a game. And once again, the Sooners let the Big 12 down - this time around, football and basketball (men's and women's) in the same season! Thanks for all your help putting the Big 12 on the national map, Boomer. </p> <p> October can't get here soon enough! See you in Dallas! </p> <p> Photo credit: aaronisnotcool ♦ </p>