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Kraft Relieved, Wildcats Get NCAA Tourney Bid

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Of The Inquirer Staff
Last year it ended with disappointment, bitterness and confusion.

Eventually it turned into one of college sport's most tangled, ugly situations. Villanova made it to the finals of the National collegiate basketball championships last March and lost to UCLA by six points. Then the Wildcats had to forfeit second place and \$72,000 when an investigation disclosed that Villanova All-American Howard Porter had signed a professional contract.

Wednesday morning, Villanova's Jack Kraft was by his phone at the Morris Inn in Notre Dame, Ind.

He admitted he had some concern whether Villanova would be invited to the NCAA tournament this year. Kraft said he felt his team's record was good enough (18-6), but he wasn't so sure about not-so-recent history.

The NCAA did invite the



Wildcats to the 1971-72 tournament as an Eastern at-large entry and Kraft was a satisfied man Wednesday afternoon as he awaited the evening tap off against Notre Dame.

Villanova will play the winner of the Southern Conference tournament in a first-round game at Princeton March 11. The Southern Conference tournament begins today in Greenville, S. C. with

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Davidson and Furman the favorites.

The winner of the Middle Atlantic Conference will play South Carolina at William and Mary College, Williamsburg, Va., and the Ivy League champion will meet Providence at St. John's, Jamaica, N. Y., in other March 11 games. Times have not been announced.

"The thing about the NCAA not inviting us back because of last year did cross my

mind," Kraft said. "But I felt like this was a new season and the team should be evaluated for this year and not for anything retroactive to last season."

"I'm much relieved. I thought our kids had played well in the last five and a half games and had worked very hard to get this bid." The Wildcats had won five straight before the season-ending game against Notre Dame.

It is possible that three city schools will be in the NCAA

tournament. St. Joseph's and Temple will compete against Rider and Lafayette Friday night in the Middle Atlantic Conference University Division playoffs. The winner of that tournament advances to the first round of NCAA play.

PENN MAY CLINCH

And fourth-ranked Pennsylvania, leading the Ivy League by a game over Princeton, needs victories over Yale and Brown on the road this weekend to clinch an NCAA spot.

Providence (17-5), South Carolina (20-4), Marshall (23-2), Florida State (23-4), Southwestern Louisiana (22-5), Houston (19-6), Hawaii (24-2) and Marquette (23-1) also accepted invitations to compete as at-large teams.

The by-passing of Duquesne (19-4) was something of a surprise in the East.

A few weeks ago, the Eastern Collegiate Athletic Conference announced that Duquesne had been using an ineligible player, senior Dave Roddy, who had transferred to Duquesne from Miami (Fla.)

'HONEST MISTAKE'

The Dukes claimed it was an "honest mistake" and that Roddy had played only "five or 10 minutes" of an extra semester.

Ernie Casale, director of athletics at Temple University and chairman of the Eastern Selection Committee of the NCAA, answered a question about Duquesne's elimination by saying, "There still was an element of doubt what their record might have been if he (Roddy) hadn't played."

"We knew he didn't score that much, but we understood he was their number one substitute and he did play the first 16 games. Maybe he made the difference in some of those games."

Syracuse (19-5) and Niagara (18-4) were other possibilities for Eastern spots.

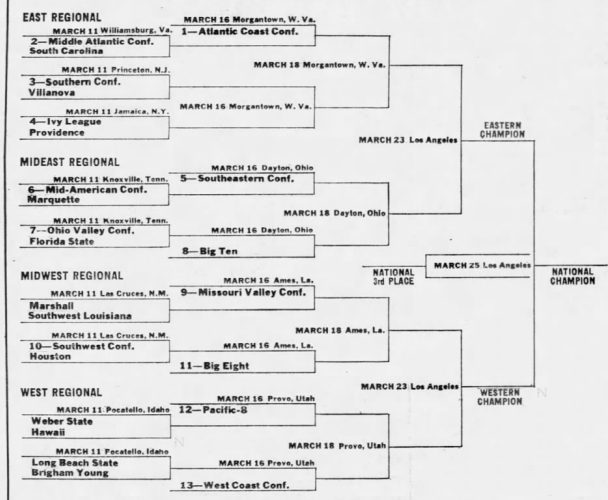
SELECTION FORMULA
Casale said selections were judged on record, schedule, where games were played and past tournament performances.

The Temple AD also said he wished his committee had extra time before making choices due to a number of important games Wednesday night including Providence-St. John's and Niagara-Syracuse.

Providence also has a game next week with Jacksonville, which accepted a bid Wednesday to the National Invitation Tournament in Madison Square Garden.

This is the sixth NCAA invitation for Kraft-coached teams at Villanova. His other five teams competed in the NIT for an 11-6-11 post-season tournament record.

1972 National Collegiate Championship Draw



Key to undecided conference races:

- 1—Decided by tournament.
- 2—Decided by tournament.
- 3—Decided by tournament.
- 4—Penn or Princeton.
- 5—Tennessee, Kentucky or Alabama.
- 6—Toledo, Ohio U. or Kent State.

- 7—Eastern Ky., Western Ky. or Morehead
- 8—Minnesota, Ohio State or Michigan.
- 9—Louisville or Memphis State.
- 10—SMU, Texas or TCU.
- 11—Kansas State or Missouri.
- 12—UCLA or USC.
- 13—San Francisco or Santa Clara.