2022 NCAA WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP







WHY SOUTH CAROLINA WILL WIN

Aliyah Boston, one of the most physical players in women's basketball averaging 16.8 points and 12.2 rebounds, should have her way inside against Louisville's undersized frontline. Dawn Staley, seeking her first national title since 2017, is a proven winner on the bench capable of making adjustments and putting her players in the best position to win. Senior guard Destanni Henderson, a 38.9% shooter from 3-point range, gives USC's offense balance on the perimeter.

WHY SOUTH CAROLINA WON'T WIN

Louisville is a team capable of pressuring opponents into mistakes, and South Carolina can be shaky with the ball at times, averaging 14.4 turnovers. South Carolina doesn't have many perimeter threats other than Henderson and is shooting just 30.8% from 3-point range. If Louisville packs it in defensively and forces South Carolina to win the game from outside, the Gamecocks could find themselves in trouble if shots don't fall.





Dawn Staley 14th season

South Carolina is going to its fourth Final Four.



WHY LOUISVILLE WILL WIN

Star guard Hailey Van Lith is a scoring threat at all three levels, averaging 14.5 points while shooting 36.4% from 3-point range. She will force South Carolina's defense to work hard. As a team, Louisville is at its best forcing turnovers and getting out in transition. Guard Kianna Smith (11.9 points per game) and forward Emily Engstler (11.8 points per game) also average in double figures in scoring, making Louisville tough to defend.

WHY LOUISVILLE WON'T WIN

Louisville doesn't have the size or physicality inside to match up with South Carolina's frontline, led by star forward Aliyah Boston and forward Victaria Saxton. Double-teaming Boston in the post will put the rest of Louisville's defense in a bind. The Cardinals are prone to scoring droughts when they aren't forcing turnovers or hitting outside shots. They get bogged down in halfcourt offense. COACH



Jeff Walz 15th season

Louisville is making its fourth Final Four appearance.

Target Center, Minneapolis, Minn.



Sunday, April 3, 2022 8 p.m. Eastern • ESPN



WHY STANFORD WILL WIN

Few teams in the NCAA have been as focused as reigning national champion and No. 1 seed Stanford. The Cardinal clinched its spot in the Final Four after dispatching Texas, avenging a loss to the Longhorns in the regular season. The one-two punch of Haley Jones (12.9 points per game) and Cameron Brink (13.4) has proved to be a winning formula, making the Cardinal many people's favorite to win its second consecutive title. This year's Final Four is No. 15 for Stanford coach Tara VanDerveer.

WHY STANFORD WON'T WIN

There hasn't been a repeat national champion since UConn won titles from 2013 to 2016. For as good as Stanford has been on offense, the Cardinal hasn't been exactly protective of the basketball. Stanford committed 20 turnovers in its Elite Eight matchup against Texas. While the Cardinal was able to overcome carelessness to reach the Final Four, the road won't be as forgiving against formidable opponents.

COACH



VanDerveer 36th season

Stanford is playing in its 15th Final Four appearance.



WHY UCONN WILL WIN

When it comes to the postseason, there's no coach in the tournament more accomplished than Huskies' head coach Geno Auriemma, who is making his 22nd appearance in the Final Four. The Huskies endured a portion of the season without star sophomore guard Paige Bueckers. She has returned to the lineup and scored 27 points in the Huskies' double-overtime win against N.C. State in the Elite Eight. The duo of Bueckers and Auriemma is going to be hard to topple





Geno Auriemma 37th season

WHY UCONN WON'T WIN

Few teams this season have been able to contain Cardinal stars Haley Jones and Cameron Brink. Stanford also doesn't have to look too far for experience, as the Cardinal won the national title last season. UConn's depth took a hit in the Elite Eight as it lost substantial contributor Dorka Juhasz. The Huskies are still well-stocked with talent, but their depth will be tested moving forward.

UConn is making its 22nd Final Four appearance.



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