



A March to Madness: A View from the Floor in the Atlantic Coast Conference

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It's the book in which America's favorite sportswriter returns to the arena of his most successful bestseller, *A Season on the Brink*. It's the book that takes us inside the intensely competitive Atlantic Coast Conference & paints a portrait of how college basketball is coached & played at the highest level. It's the book that takes us onto the courts, into the locker rooms, & inside the high-pressure world of the talented coaches who have helped make the ACC's nine colleges - Duke, North Carolina, North Carolina State, Clemson, Georgia Tech, Virginia, Maryland, Wake Forest, & Florida State - world-renowned for their championship basketball teams. The author's afterword to this edition will recap the ACC's current season & preview the 1998-99 rivalries.

A March to Madness: A View from the Floor in the Atlantic Coast Conference Details

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From Reader Review A March to Madness: A View from the Floor in the Atlantic Coast Conference for online ebook

Sharron says

Very detailed yet quite interesting look back to one season in ACC men's college basketball. I remember many of the games discussed but liked reading about the "behind the scenes" and insight into the coaches' histories and personalities. Highly recommend to any college basketball fan!

Chris Snyder says

The ACC is one of the top basketball conferences. John Feinstein gives the reader a look at the 1996-97 season from coaches' perspectives. It is more about the coaches than the games themselves. In a season that started with Wake, Maryland and Clemson ranked in the top 5, Carolina 0-3 in the ACC, Tim Duncan a senior, Herb Sendek a rookie coach, and Dean Smith closing on Adolph Rupp's record, join Smith (Carolina), Rick Barnes (Clemson), Mike Krzyzewski (Duke), Pat Kennedy (Florida State), Bobby Cremins (Georgia Tech), Gary Williams (Maryland), Sendek (NC State), Jeff Jones (Virginia), and Dave Odom (Wake) as they each try to make March Madness.

Claire says

There's nothing I love more than books about decades-old sports rivalries. This was also fun because I'm pretty sure I went to at least one of the Georgia Tech games that season (although probably not against an ACC team since I never went to a game they lost). Feinstein's a great writer and I really respect all of these coaches so much after reading them, especially Krzyzewski (I'll always hate Duke but after reading about how he would visit Valvano in the hospital every day, I like him a lot more.)

Chris Ruggeri says

A thoroughly captivating book. Just as Feinstein's *The Last Amateurs* left me annoyed that I hadn't followed basketball more closely in college, *A March to Madness* clued me in to all the ACC basketball I had only halfheartedly kept abreast of in high school.

Feinstein does a great job of going back and forth between the nine different ACC schools (as of 1997). He provides a backdrop for each school, and each coach, and manages to interweave all the different storylines as each of the teams move in and out of each other's particular spheres of tradition and ethos. Just thinking about the logistics of how this book must have been mapped out gives me a headache. But somehow when I was reading it, everything seemed to flow nicely.

This book also drove home two points for me:

1. Coaching college basketball is hard. The hours are ridiculous, most of these guys' marriages end in

divorce, the stress is off the charts, there's no job security, no set path into the profession, no guarantees from year to year, and you constantly have to recruit new kids because there's a built-in expiration date on every player you coach. Not to mention, at the end of the day, you don't get to play a minute of the games, which, if I were that close to the action, would drive me crazy.

2. Everything is fleeting. Seven of the nine coaches in the book are no longer with the same team (only Krzyzewski and Williams remain). Players leave early. Heck the ACC doesn't even look the same these days (VA Tech, Miami, and stupid BC are in the mix). It's disconcerting, though it makes the exceptions that much more noteworthy (see the two coaches above).

Finally, it was fun to come across future NBA players' names and know where or how they were going to end up; the chance to meet guys like Tim Duncan, Matt Harpring or Vince Carter in a different context, before they turned into the people the world knows them as today was an enjoyable thing.

Sam says

Too much Rick Barnes and not enough Gary Williams.

Cam says

The ACC has always been known as a competitive basketball conference. But what else do we really know about the ACC?

John Feinstein plunges into the Atlantic Coast Conference, and explores each individual team, as well as each coach. It talks about the rivalries, as well as the history of teams, in a well put cleverly well put together way. Instead of droning on in a massive clump of subjects and managing to squeak in mention of a specific team, he states the subject, than thoroughly takes each team and coach and covers everything there is to know about that team in the subject he's talking about.

John Feinstein is an author I have heard and read a lot about, and is known for his sports book. It's great to read a book by a guy who actually gets sports, and also has a sense of humor to add to his extensive knowledge of the game of basketball. He spent a lot of time with the teams while writing the book, so he has basically everything you want to know as an ACC fan.

Obviously this isn't something that was really part of the book, but I found this book really interesting, because it was published in '97, so I will hear about young coaches in the book who are now successful with other teams. And a bunch of players who are now in the NBA, who were playing at the time, and even players who I knew played at a certain school, but I didn't know those were in fact the dates they were playing. It all makes for an even more interesting read.

If, you are a basketball, or you just follow college basketball, or even just make a bracket for the NCAA tournament, this book will become absolutely addicting. Every page you find yourself thinking, "Oh, I think I knew that he played for Duke" or "I never knew Clemson won that year." It's a college hoops fan's dream book.

Nikola Zelenovic says

Decent book, talks about March Madness on the Atlantic Coast Bracket that included many good teams, and had many good games.

Steven says

I have read more than a few John Feinstein books, and I do not think that he is ever better than when he is writing about college basketball. This book follows the ups and down of the nine (before the conference was forever tainted by the inclusion of BC, Miami, and Va Tech) member institutions of the Atlantic Coast Conference during the 1996-1997 season.

The 96/97 season was truly memorable, especially with the competitiveness of the ACC. In a lot of ways, 96/97 was one of the last really great years of the conference with so many great and very good teams throughout the conference. I think the conference is a bit top heavy now with Duke and NC at the top and the rest of the league usually a bit far behind. In 96/97, at the top of the conference you had UNC with Dean Smith making one last run at the Final Four, Duke becoming the Duke we would all grow to hate with jump shooting specialists like Steve Wojo and Trajan Langdon and even more annoying people like Greg Newton, Wake Forest with Tim Duncan, Clemson with Buckner and McIntyre and coached by Rick Barnes, and Maryland, starting to come into their own with Gary Williams coaching folks like Laron Profit and Keith Booth. Even the average teams in the conference, like Virginia and Florida State seemed a lot better during that season. Indeed, the depth of quality teams in the league during that season, has really not been surpassed since that period.

What I appreciated the most about the book was the stroll down memory lane. So many memorable players and coaches like Ricky Peral of Wake Forest, Jeremy Hyatt of NC State, Serge Zwicker of UNC, and Kerry Thompson of Florida State have really been forgotten until I read this book. Locally, although I had fully converted to my alma mater (who would soon sign an up and coming coach in Billy Donovan after this season) during that period, 96/97 should be remembered as the last year of the Pat Kennedy era. (Well overshadowed by Dean Smith's retirement that same year). Kennedy always had his teams prepared and it is interesting to note that FSU has only been in the NCAA Tourney once (the very next year) since Pat Kennedy left. He brought talent to the school and in all honesty, even though basketball was always an afterthought, Kennedy brought the program to heights it had not previously been at, it is a bit sad he is not recognized locally for his coaching ability.

At times, the book is a bit too much of a love fest to Coach K, but that is understandable considering where Feinstein went to school. I really appreciated all of the mini-biographies of the coaches; however, I thought the section of the book detailing the NCAA Tourney felt a bit rushed, especially after the shot by shot account of various early season games like Duke vs. Indiana in the NIT and Wake Forest and Virginia going through the usual early fare of non-conference cupcakes. A nice break for me in the eun of classic novels I have been reading lately.

Ronald White says

A great book! John Feinstein at his best! Although Feinstein is a wonderful writer, his books on basketball are his best. In this particular book, there is much to learn about the daily happenings in the Atlantic Coast Conference. It feels like you have a front row seats at the games. It feels like you are in the locker room, before and after the games. It feels intense in breathtaking way! Pull up a chair and enjoy the marvelous words offered by Feinstein once more. You will not regret it!

Jeff says

This was a great look at the 1996-97 college basketball season in the ACC. What is amazing is Feinstein's access to all the coaches throughout the season. He did a good job in this book avoiding repetitive elements and staying away from injecting himself into the story. It is fascinating to see some of the "behind the scenes" chronicles, particularly Coach K of Duke and Gary Williams of Maryland. A great read.

Emily Von pfahl says

As a life long ACC basketball fan this is a dream come true. Feinstein does a great job of even handedly describing the entire season of each team in the ACC. I happen to be a Duke fan, but rest assured that the season profiled is when Coach K had to leave halfway through it to have his hip replaced. Duke does not perform well so you can't accuse me of bias.

Ed Morgan says

A story of the 1997 ACC basketball season. The central character in the story is ACC Player of the Millennium Jeremy Hyatt. Each of the (then) 9 ACC teams are followed on an in depth basis. Some of the coaches gave more access than others, so there was more written from their perspective. Then-NC State coach Hreb Sendak, in his first year of coaching, limited John Feinstein's access to the team, but not even that could take away from the brilliance of State's senior guard/forward, Jeremy Hyatt. Hyatt (with a small amount of help from his teammates) managed to throw off the shackles of an 0-8 conference start to become the first #8 seed to advance to the ACC Tournament finals, dethroning, demoralizing, and generally embarrassing Mike Krzyzewski and the evil Dukies.

Unfortunately, not even the genius of Hyatt could overcome the conspiracy of Dean Smith and his cronies in referee stripes in the title game. I swear to you that there were black helicopters circling the Greensboro Coliseum that day.

Still, we could all learn something from this book. That is, ACC teams that wear blue are the embodiment of all evil. Please, burn your UNC and Duke gear. Do it think of the children!!!!

Kyle Ball says

The book I read for this quarter was called "A March to Madness." It is written by John Feinstein who I thought was always a great author and always made some very good books. This book however was one of the greatest books I have read in a long time. This book is talking about college basketball the whole book, so obviously if you do not like college basketball this is not your book. If you do like college basketball though then this could be one of your favorite books. In this book they talk about what college basketball was like in the 90's in the Atlantic Coast Conference. This book will tell you the brutal time all these teams went through in the conference. It gives you a rundown of the history of all the teams in the conference. It goes through the players each team had, the coaches and their background story. You learn a lot about the coaches mostly in this book and what their lives were like. It also explains in great detail how hard it is to be a college basketball coach, especially in the ACC. These guys are the best of the best and this book really shows how great they really were. It also shows you how hard it is to be a college basketball player. They make it look so easy on television, but in real life it is one of the hardest sports ever. I highly recommend this book for all the college basketball fans out there, it will make you love the game so much more.

Sean Kelly says

Because I can sit for hours and read minutiae about the sidelines, coaching decisions, and team drama of college basketball, Feinstein can keep writing these sorts of books and I'll keep reading them. Admittedly, I'm several decades behind, but some/many of the players (now former players) and coaches are still relevant, or the memories of their performances are fresh enough to keep these stories relevant. Feinstein is adept at weaving numerous stories from each team in the 1990s era ACC into one comprehensive narrative that I never tired of reading. I'll continue to read his work, and I'll catch up to him some day...

Karl Schaeffer says

For me, the blush is off the rose in regards to D1 NCAA sports. It's a modern form of slavery. Young men and women are working their butts off so the NCAA can make billions of dollars off them and the "student athletes" are getting virtually nothing in return. A travesty. That being said, I was less than inclined to pick up a book chronicling '97-'98 Atlantic Coast Conference NCAA D1A basketball season. It'll be dated, I thought. But no, it's a very entertaining read. John Feinstein loves sports, and he writes a good story. It's not dated. And while acknowledging the cynicism that is modern day college athletics, Feinstein captures the beauty and excitement of sport, as well as "the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat".
