

Cam's Challenge: Pierce officially wraps up title

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Published in Sports on April 7, 2015 1:48 PM

So close, Bill.

You were so close.

As you all may remember, we had a tightly-contested final round of this year's challenge. While Freddie Pierce had already clinched the best statistical record, Bill Clingan had a chance to get within a game of Fred as well as pick the winner.

Should Wisconsin have won, the office, the town and quite probably the entire state of North Carolina would have been ripped apart by endless and merciless debate. UNC-Duke would have been replaced by Fred-or-Bill. There are no words that can accurately describe the chaos that would have ensued.

So maybe we're all just better off (I know, I can't even say it with a straight face) with Duke winning.

This settles it.

The inaugural Cam's Challenge is complete, and the winner is Freddie Pierce. He picked Duke to beat Kentucky 81-77. We all know what happened to Kentucky and his score estimate is way off, but he's still our winner. One hundred dollars will be donated in his name to a charity of his choice.

So really, we all win.

Except for Wisconsin.

And Bill.

And everyone else in this bracket.

We all lost.

Here are some additional shout outs, because I was bad at sports all my life and firmly believe in participation trophies.

Bill went a totally different way with his bracket and almost came out looking like a genius. Much respect. Your Wisconsin pick almost made me forget that you had Iowa State in the Final Four.

They lost in the first round Bill. The first round.

Next, let's give a round of applause for Joe Gurley and Parker Jones. Both also had Duke winning the national championship. As you probably know by now, Parker is the feel-good story of the challenge. You might say, "but Cam, she had Wisconsin losing to Coastal Carolina in the opening round." And to that I say good for her. We should all try and live a little more like Parker. Go ahead, pick Coastal Carolina, whatever that might mean to you. For me, it means leaving work in the middle of the morning.*

*I was told this wasn't allowed almost immediately.

Finally, shout out to all of you for taking part in this challenge. You all have miraculous senses of humor because if it was the other way around I would have complained like, at least three times. Also, my bracket was one of the worst brackets we had so it'd be totally understandable if you never took me seriously again. I mean, one of my first jokes in this series was about Duke losing in the first round.

We'll see you guys next year.

Actually, one more shout out to Fred the Dog. Fred, we certainly had our differences. The main one is that you're a dog and I'm not. You may have beaten me by one game, but it's okay. Maybe next year I'll have someone else make my picks, too, and then we'll see who the winner is.

This isn't over, Fred.

It's never over.

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