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FRIDAY MARCH 19, 2021





WVU WOMENS Sunday, March 21 vs. lehigh



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WVU, Morehead State gear up for first-round matchup

BY JUSTIN JACKSON

JJackson@DominionPost.com

Bob Huggins said there is one message he will make clear to his team before it begins play in the NCAA tournament:

"Everybody in there can beat you," Huggins said. "As been seen in recent years, anybody can lose. That includes Baylor and Gonzaga, who everybody acts like can't be beat, but I certainly don't think that's the case."

Third-seeded West Virginia (18-9) will have to avoid an upset-minded Morehead State at 9:50 p.m. today on truTV in order to move on to the second round.

The Eagles (23-7) come into the game having won 19 of its last 20 games, including an 86-71 victory in the Ohio Valley Conference tournament finals against Belmont.

And while Morehead State is making its first NCAA appearance since 2011, the Eagles don't plan on playing the role of the little-school underdog.

"We're going to stay who we are," Morehead head coach Preston Spradlin said. "I think you'd be pretty foolish coming into the NCAA tournament having won 19 of your last 20 and then scrap everything you've done. You have to stick

to your identity. We're going to win the battle in the paint and we're going to drive the ball and see where that gets us."

The Eagles made it this far based on their defense. They're 31st in the country in opponent's field goal percentage (40.3%) and have held teams to 63 points per game.

"It starts defensively for us and we've put a lot of time into defense," Spradlin said. "Our guys bought in early on and we were going to be an elite defensive team. We've got a real cerebral team defensively. Our guys are very intelligent and we've got good length for a mid-major team. Our guards are 6-foot-4 and can play and guard multiple positions."

Spradlin was a graduate assistant at Kentucky in 2010, when WVU beat the Wildcats to advance to the Final Four.

The Eagles coach jokes that he had little say about Kentucky's game plan that night, but this season's Mountaineers have some of the same qualities as the 2010 version.

"The things that are going to be consistent with coach Huggins is the identity, the toughness and the tenacity they play with," Spradlin said. "I don't care who is wearing those jerseys, if that man is on the sidelines wearing a pullover, that's

exactly how they're going to play. That's what you have to be prepared for."

The key matchups heading into the game will be West Virginia's 3-point shooting against Morehead State's defense.

Opponents shot just 30.7% from 3-point range against Morehead State, while the Mountaineers average 7.5 made 3-pointers per game.

"They've got some really talented shotmakers," Spradlin said. "in watching them, it hasn't been as much about watching their plays than it is watching their guys make tough shots. Our defense is kind of built to make you take tough shots. We want to contest shots and we pride ourselves on limiting you to one shot."

Meanwhile, the Mountaineers will be trying to shake a late-season funk that saw them lose three of their last four games.

WVU's schedule included 17 games — the Mountaineers went 8-9 — against teams in the NCAA tournament.

Of the nine losses, only one was by more than five points.

"I think it's got to help," Huggins said.
"It would have helped more if we had won some more of the close ones."

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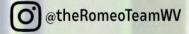


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Tournaments will be something we've never seen



JUSTIN JACKSON

Welcome to the 2021 men's and women's NCAA tournaments, which will be a unique "bubble" experience for all of those involved.

Players and coaches will be tested daily for COVID-19 and then teams will be basically locked into their own floors of the hotel before and after games.

"When we get there, you have to quarantine for 48 hours," said WVU women's coach Mike Carey, who will lead the Mountaineers against Lehigh in the first round at 8 p.m. Sunday. "We'll have to eat boxed breakfasts, lunches and dinners. When you leave the rooms, you have to call someone and tell them vou're going down to the meal room, or whatever, and you have to go as a group. This is not going to be like any experience they've ever had."

That will also include the games themselves.

Gone from the tournament sites in Indianapolis and Texas are the large gathering of fans and seating will be limited at each game.

"We've told our guys, 'Hey, this is a very level playing field in the NCAA tournament this year,' " said Morehead State men's coach Preston Spradlin, who will lead the Eagles against West Virginia in the first round at 9:50 p.m. today.



WVU forward Kari Niblack and the Mountaineers will have to contend with the NCAA tournament bubble in San Antonio.

"You've got a lot of coaches who have years and years of NCAA tournament experience and players who have it. It doesn't mean as much this year, because it's so different. I think your ability to adapt is going to prove to be beneficial."

Adapting will be the key, especially for the smaller-school underdogs.

In past years, tournament sites would host eight teams and there would generally be fans of all eight teams in the crowd for each game.

The big-name school would have its fans, but the rest of the crowd would

generally pull for the upset.

It created a buzz around each arena whenever the small school from the conference you never heard of before was hanging around with a Kansas or Kentucky late in the second half.

Spradlin felt that in 2010 as a graduate assistant at Kentucky, as the Wildcats were beat by the Mountaineers in the Elite Eight.

Minus the Kentucky fans, everyone else in the Carrier Dome that night pulled for the Mountaineers.

The difference now is Spradlin and

Morehead State won't likely have that same buzz flying around Lucas Oil Stadium if the Eagles are in a close game with the Mountaineers.

There won't be thousands cheering on the little guy this year, except from their TVs at home.

That's got to make a difference.

Even though every team in these two tournaments have already gone through a season playing in front of little or no fans in attendance, this is the ultimate David vs. Goliath setting now, and David won't have the usual pick-me-up from the crowd as its had so many times before.

That's why in filling out your brackets, you may want to hold off on picking a lot of upsets, because these tournaments will be anything other than normal.

So, we go back to Spradlin's "level playing field" comment, and we wonder if that's truly the case?

Will the underdogs have a tougher time beating the big boys if there is no crowd to push them through?

"No. not really." Spradlin said. "I think COVID has kind of prepared us all for this and playing in front of lesser crowds.

"You kind of had to learn to not draw your energy from the crowds as much. If you've watched any of our games this year, we've got the best bench in the country. We said, 'Rather it's a lot or little in terms of fans, we're going to bring the same energy from the guys on our bench.' We have the goal every game to get a bench warning and we've had quite a few this year. We've had quite a few conversations with officials about the rowdiness of our bench, but I'm very proud of that. It keeps it fun."

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RICHARD A. "DYKE" RAESE A FUNDAMENTAL COACH AND BUSINESS MAN



EXCELLENCE IN SPORTS AND BUSINESS

In 1942, Richard A. "Dyke" Raese took an undersized, undermanned team with no scholarship players to the National Invitational Tournament and won the only national championship in a major sport in the history of West Virginia University.

In 1958, Dyke Raese secured a high-quality limestone deposit estimated at over 100 million tons near the mouth of Seneca Caverns and founded Greer Lime Company. The initial operation included three crushers and four vibrator screens to produce a variety of stone sizes. Today with its state-of-the-art equipment and lime burning and hydrating products, Greer Lime Company now delivers all types of aggregate and lime related products to 13 states.

There is a direct correlation between excellence in sports and business. Both professions require a commitment to diligence, creativity and innovation. Dyke Raese had all three, and he used them in every aspect throughout his life.

Born in the small town of Davis, West Virginia, Dyke Raese grew up with a love for sports. Upon graduating from WVU in 1932, Raese became head coach of both the basketball and football programs at Davis High School. Inheriting small teams in both sports, Raese understood the need to improvise and adapt in order to overcome the odds with which he and his teams were faced.

HIS LOYALTY

Raese was one of the first coaches in the country to institute the T-formation and the forward pass in football (George Halas of the Chicago Bears being the first) whereby the quarterback gets under center to take the snap. In his first game, the opposing coach protested the formation almost every time that Raese's offense set up. The formation was eventually upheld and Raese's team won the game.



When Raese took over as the head coach for the Mountaineer basketball team in 1938 he encountered a similar situation: a team lacking in stature, size, and without any scholarship players. He decided to employ a ball-handling offense designed to deny the other team of the ball for as long as possible. He did this by installing a tenacious zone defense and an over-loaded zone offense that emphasized fast, deceptive passing-and a lethal fast break. That game plan was the deciding factor in the Mountaineers' overtime victory against No.1 LIU in the opening round of the1942 NIT. In the words of famed opposing LIU coach Claire Bee, "They fast broke us silly."

Choosing to forgo a career in coaching, Raese decided to embark upon a business career instead and became President of Greer Limestone. Never one to rest on past laurels, Raese's only desire was to improve. In 1958, along with geologist Paul Price, he set out to find another limestone deposit to further grow the Greer Limestone Company.

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Like the correlation between excellence in sports and business, as a consumer of these same products, a unique relationship is created between Greer Lime and many of its customers. Not many companies can claim that distinction.



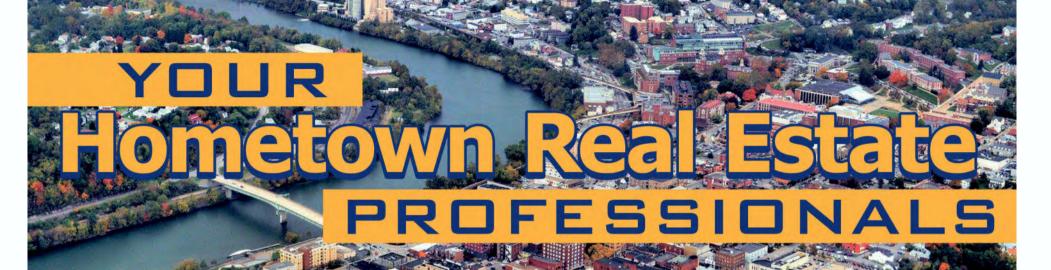
A man who thrilled West Virginians with his coaching ability, friendship, and allegiance to his state throughout his lifetime, Dyke Raese is greatly missed. Greer Lime, the company he founded will live on for years to come.

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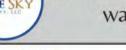






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Lehigh awaits WVU in first round of women's tourney

BY JUSTIN JACKSON

JJackson@DominionPost.com

Scouting reports are never simple, but the one Mike Carey has on Lehigh leans specifically to one area:

The Mountain Hawks (10-5) live and die at the 3-point line.

"They have a lot of shooters," Carey said.

Do they ever.

In maybe the most telling statistic there is on Lehigh, the Mountain Hawks attempted 429 3-pointers, but only 214 free throws.

"When you shoot a lot of threes, you're not attacking the rim as much," Carey said. "We'll have to defend the three, but the other things is, on the misses, there's going to be a lot of long rebounds.

"Our guards are going to have to get



Kysre Gondrezick

involved with the rebounding. If we do that, we have opportunities with fast breaks."

The Mountaineers (21-6) are making their first NCAA appearance since 2017 when they play the Mountain Hawks at 8 p.m. Sunday in San Antonio.

Lehigh, located in Bethlehem, Pa., is a member of the Patriot League, which only played conference games during the 2020-21 season due to COVID-19.

A first-round victory would set WVU up to play the winner of Georgia Tech-Stephen F. Austin on Tuesday.

Leading the way for Lehigh is sophomore guard Frannie Hottinger, who averages 14.3 points per game. She shoots 34% from behind the arc and is one of six Lehigh players with at least 10 3-pointers this season.

"They sort of remind me of Villanova from the old Big East days," Carey said. "They run a lot of the same stuff with the curls and shooting threes. We'll have to be disciplined and stay out on their shooters."

The Mountaineers, Carey said, will enter the game on an upswing healthwise.

Esmery Martinez and KK Deans both injured their ankles in the Big 12 championship game against Baylor.

Kysre Gondrezick injured her ankle prior to the start of the Big 12 tournament.

"I think Esmery will be fine and I think KK will be fine, too," Carey said. "

Junior point guard Madisen Smith has been nursing a hamstring injury. Carey confirmed Smith would travel with the team to San Antonio, but there was no guarantee she would play.

(4) WVU vs.(13) Lehigh

WHEN: 8 p.m. Sunday **WHERE:** Bill Greehey Arena,

San Antonio

Mountain m. Sunday sto. 853HD; DirecTV 208; DISH 248)

RADIO: 100.9 WZST-FM **POSTGAME**: dominion

post.com

"I just don't know," Carey said. "Is she getting better? Yes, but I don't know if we're going to be willing to put her out there. She'll have a chance to get better this week, so we'll see.

"Now, she wants to play and she's going to be mad at me. I already warned her mom and dad that she's going to call you saying she's mad at me, but I'm not going to put her out there unless I feel she's going to be safe."

This will be the ninth time the Mountaineers have played in the NCAA tournament under Carey, but the first time it hasn't played on someone else's home floor.

Before COVID-19, the early rounds of the women's NCAA tournament were held at the higher seeds' home arena.

"We would have been in position to host this year, isn't that amazing?" Carey said. "I would rather have every year playing on a neutral floor. I think that's fair."

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What to watch the first week of the NCAA men's tournament

The 2020 NCAA tournament was wiped out by the coronavirus, robbing the sports world of one of its greatest spectacles.

After a chaotic season through a pandemic, March Madness is back.

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This year's bracket will be like no other, played entirely in Indiana over a span of three weeks.

There's no Duke, no Kentucky, but plenty of new favorites and upstarts who have waited a long time for their chance.

Gonzaga. Wire-to-wire No. 1 pursuing the perfect 1976 Indiana Hoosiers.

Illinois. Tough, talented, loaded. Avo and Kofi may be the bracket's best 1-2 punch.

Baylor. Shooters everywhere, tenacious on D. lost once all vear.

Michigan. Wolverines have done great things in a short period under Juwan Howard. Hopefully Isaiah Livers' foot injury won't cause them problems.

Iowa. Hawkeyes can light it up when they're on and have one of the nation's best players in Luka Garza.

THE HONEY BAKED HOMES

HE HONEY BAKED Names

No. 12 UC Santa Barbara over No. 5 Creighton, West Region. There's a chance the Blueiays could shoot the Gauchos out of the gym. If they're off, watch out for UCSB, which has lost once in the new year.

No. 12 Winthrop over No. 5 Villanova. East Region. The Wildcats are wthout point guard Collin Gillespie for the rest of the season. The Eagles have lost once all season.

No. 10 Rutgers over No. 7 Clemson, Midwest Region, today. The Scarlet Knights may not have been here for a long

time, but oddsmakers made them a favorite over the Tigers.

No. 12 Georgetown over No. 5 Colorado, East Region, Saturday, Workers at Madison Square Garden finally figured out who Patrick Ewing is after Hoyas won the Big East title. The Buffaloes may find out, too.

No. 13 Ohio over No. 4 Virginia, West Region, Saturday. The Cavaliers had to bow out of the ACC tournament due to a positive COVID-19 test and have been bounced early before. The Bobcats have some upset history, too, beating Michigan on the way to the 2012 Sweet 16.



HONEY BAKED Hanes





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So call today to schedule or reschedule your surgery or procedure.

We're all in this together – keep fighting and stay healthy. Let's go, Mountaineers!

Sincerely,



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