MARCH ML MANIA 2026

Community Async Hackathon · Feb 27 – Mar 31 · Kaggle · $50K Prize Pool

WHAT IS IT?

Predict the outcome of every possible NCAA Men's & Women's tournament matchup — before the bracket is set. You submit a probability for each game: how likely is Team A to beat Team B?

This is a **solo-friendly**, async competition. No meetings, no teams required. Work at your own pace, share progress in Slack.

HOW YOU'RE SCORED

Metric: Brier Score (lower = better)

Random guessing	**~0.250**
Seed baseline	**~0.220–0.230**
Good community score	**~0.190–0.210**
Top 10%	**~0.160–0.175**

PICK YOUR PATH

PATH A
The Basketball Fan

Sports fans & bracket enthusiasts. Turn your intuition into predictions — no coding required.

✔ Upload CSVs to AI tool
✔ Ask questions, get insights
✔ Share write-ups in Slack

Tool: Cowork or AI chat of choice

PATH B
The Data Explorer

Describe what you want, your AI writes the code.

✔ Explore data with AI prompts
✔ Generate a Python submission
✔ Iterate on Kaggle scores

Tool: Cowork or AI coding agent

PATH C
The Model Builder

Engineers & data scientists. Build full ML pipelines with an AI coding agent.

✔ Feature engineering & EDA
✔ XGBoost + calibration
✔ Ensemble models

Tool: AI coding agent (terminal)

KEY DATES

Feb 27	Kickoff — guide + data shared in Slack
Mar 1–7	Week 1 — explore data, first submission
Mar 8–14	Week 2 — refine model, iterate
~Mar 19	Stage 1 deadline — bracket not yet set
Mar 18–20	Stage 2 opens — predict actual matchups
Mar 31	Showcase — share results in #march-ml-mania

HOW TO JOIN

1. Join the Kaggle competition and download the data
2. Pick your path (A / B / C) using the Participant Guide
3. Send your first AI prompt — copy it directly from the guide
4. Submit to Kaggle and post your score in **#march-ml-mania**
5. Iterate and improve — weekly async standups keep the energy going

RESOURCES & SLACK

☐ **Main channel:** #march-ml-mania
☐ **Help channel:** #march-ml-mania-help
☐ **Full guide:** Pinned in #march-ml-mania
☐ **Kaggle:** kaggle.com/competitions/march-machine-learning-mania-2026

March ML Mania 2026 · No experience required · Everyone is welcome · Async & individual-friendly