# STAT DEPT NCAA BASKETBALL CONTEST

For those unfamiliar with the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) basketball championship, 68 college teams are chosen to play in a single elimination tournament. Games are played on Thursday through Sunday for each of the next two weekends culminating with the Final Four teams and then the championship game. The tournament bracket is available at http://www.ncaa.com/interactive-bracket/basketball-men/d1. Teams stay in the tournament as long as they continue to win.

Traditional NCAA bracket contests require that you pick the winner of every game. This challenge requires that you pick the cluster of college teams that you believe will win the most games throughout the tournament. Rules are as follows:

1) Submit your choice of a subset ($A$) of the 68 teams in the tournament. The subset may be as large as you choose, subject to the other rules.

2) In each of the four NCAA tournament regions, teams are seeded from 1 to 16, so that four teams have seed $s$ for each value of $s$. Each player (that's you) gets 100 coins. Let C($s$) be the cost of a team seeded as $s$, for $s$ = 1, ... , 16. The sum of the costs for teams in your subset must not exceed 100.

| $s$ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C($s$) | 25 | 19 | 13 | 12 | 11 | 10 | 8 | 5 |
| $s$ | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| C($s$) | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

3) Your score is the total number of games won by the teams in your subset, G($A$), from Round 2 through the championship game. Rankings of contest players are based on G($A$).

4) There is a "First Four" opening round played Tuesday and Wednesday this week to determine the last four entries in the main bracket of 64 colleges. Eight teams participate in these initial "play-in" games. You may select both of the teams in a First Four game for the single cost associated with a team of that seed. Wins during this opening round do not count toward G($A$).

5) If multiple subsets have an equivalent number of wins, the subset containing a team with six wins is deemed superior. If no subsets involved in a tie contain such a team, the subset containing more teams with five wins is best. Comparison continues at four wins and so on until the tie is broken.

6) If you'd like to play, submit your subset of teams by the **Thursday which begins Round 1 at 11:00am CT** to go.illinois.edu/stat_ncaa_contest.

*It's completely FREE, so no reason not to participate with your fellow statisticians!* Standings and round-by-round results will be posted at http://publish.illinois.edu/dunger/ncaa-contest.

Thanks and credit to Prof. James Stapleton (Michigan State) for devising the contest and Prof. Alex Stepanov for bringing it to Illinois.