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THE JOURNAL REPORT: NCAA BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

Where Are They Now?

Their tournament is over. Here's how one Final Four team was built -- and what happened to it in the years after the final buzzer.

By **STEFAN FATSIS**
 Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
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One has a \$67 million National Basketball Association contract. Two play professionally in Italy, another in South Korea. One sells dental supplies. One runs a trucking business.

One is in prison.

The Mississippi State Bulldogs staged an improbable run to the Final Four of the National Collegiate Athletic Association's men's basketball tournament in 1996. For the players, the experience was life-altering; "just kind of a state of amazement," one says.



¹ See the full **NCAA Basketball Tournament**² report. Plus, download **men's**³ and **women's**⁴ brackets.

But just as it will for the lucky quartet that survives the 65-team field and reaches the promised land on April 2 in St. Louis, the cheering stopped quickly.

What happens to successful college athletes after the thrill is gone? Did the university provide the education it promised the high-school stars? Or are the public's worst thoughts about big-time intercollegiate athletics,

shaped by decades of recruiting and academic scandals, all too true?

The story of one Final Four team -- how it was assembled, how its players performed on and off the court, what happened to them afterward -- can't fully answer all those questions. It can, however, provide a context for college sports beyond the supercharged, surreal world of March Madness.



AP Photo/ Rugelio Solis

Former Bulldogs head coach **Richard Williams** at Pearl High


The Team

When he was hired in 1986, Richard Williams was Mississippi State's fifth head coach in 10 years. He was virtually unknown, a former high-school coach and part-time Bulldogs assistant who worked in the campus recruiting office. "I had no idea what I was doing," he says.

The Southeastern Conference, or SEC, in which Mississippi State plays, was home to coaching legends Dale Brown and Eddie Sutton. The Bulldogs, 8-22 the previous season, had been to the NCAA tournament just once, in 1963. That team had to sneak out of town to dodge a court injunction barring it from playing against blacks.

In Mr. Williams's fourth season, 1989-90, Mississippi State reached the postseason National Invitation Tournament. The next year, the Bulldogs

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tied for the SEC championship -- with a Louisiana State team led by Shaquille O'Neal -- and played in the NCAA tournament.

The exposure improved Mississippi State's profile, but not enough to persuade stud recruits to choose tiny Starkville, Miss., over hoops meccas like SEC rival Kentucky. Over time, Mr. Williams and his assistants focused on retaining in-state prospects and cutting down on academically iffy junior-college transfers.

The Bulldogs reached the Sweet 16 in the 1995 tournament, losing to eventual champion UCLA. Mr. Williams believed he was on the cusp of something special. He also felt pressure to get there. "You start to compromise some of your ideals in the recruiting process," he says.

"We needed one more player."

The Player

Dontae' Jones -- his mother added the apostrophe for distinctiveness -- was fun-loving and loquacious. He grew up in public housing in Nashville, Tenn., with both parents but little money. When he was injured as a high-school junior, his grades faltered. Academically ineligible for basketball as a senior, he left school. Mr. Jones cut up chickens at a Kenny Rogers Roasters and played in a midnight basketball league. "I wasn't a bad kid or anything," he says. "But when basketball wasn't a priority in my life, I wasn't focusing on anything."

Another player told the coach at Northeast Mississippi Community College in Booneville, Miss., about him. Mr. Jones got an equivalency diploma and a scholarship. He developed into a 6-foot-7 scoring machine, a junior-college All-American averaging 29 points a game. "We were a Sweet 16 team without you," a Mississippi State assistant coach told him. "I think we can be a Final Four team with you."

Mr. Williams had reservations. Mr. Jones would need 36 credits in summer and correspondence courses to be eligible to play. "We talked about it: Should we or shouldn't we?" Mr. Williams says.

The coach had leeway recruiting chancier kids if they were Mississippians; Mr. Jones was going to school in-state. "Mississippi State has always considered itself the people's university of Mississippi," athletic director Larry Templeton says. "If we didn't take him, somebody else was certainly going to."

The NCAA investigated Mr. Jones's prodigious summer studies and cleared him to play. Mr. Jones says he recognizes Mississippi State relaxed standards to enroll him. But he also knows that high team grade-point averages don't win national championships. Real players do.

"I don't think there were a lot of guys who were going to Mississippi State thinking they could go to the NBA," he says.

The Program

At Mississippi State, Mr. Jones went to class regularly. It beat the alternative. The basketball team dispatched staff members to monitor attendance. Missing a class meant a 6 a.m. workout with the team's strength coach: a long run on dirt roads with dumbbells held aloft.

Like all major NCAA Division I schools, Mississippi State has a network to ensure athletes get academic help. Players had to attend study halls three nights a week. Tutors were available in all subjects. Advisers helped pick classes and tracked grades. Before road trips, they checked with professors and collected assignments and materials.

The coddling disgusts critics of big-time college athletics. "If we're hand-holding these people and then say, 'Hey, they got a degree,' are we truly serving them well?" says David Ridpath, an assistant professor of sports management at Mississippi State and associate director of the Drake Group, a faculty-led sports reform organization.



AP Photo/ John Russell

Dontae' Jones with the Nashville Rhythm

CATCHING UP WITH

The members of Mississippi State's 1996 Final Four team, and what they're doing today

STARTERS

But to Linda Buehler, the basketball team's academic coordinator from 1993 to 2001, such measures are practical. College athletes often don't arrive prepared to handle the work or the severe demands on their time. "You've got to take them where they are when they enter the university, not where you wish they'd been," she says. Her goal: "To get them as much of an education as possible to make them able to survive in society."

Ms. Buehler recalls the Final Four team as "fairly typical." Some were excellent students. Some "had to work very hard to get C's and D's, but with tutoring and help going to class managed to get C's."

The players respected Ms. Buehler. They did their work and took advantage of the help. "They would get you with someone who would show you what you did wrong," says Russell Walters, a 6-foot-10 senior who started at forward. "But they wouldn't write the paper."

Professors changing grades to keep a player eligible? "That's not the college basketball I knew," says Darryl Wilson, a senior guard and the team's leading scorer. "I worked hard every day." Mr. Wilson sat out his freshman season under an NCAA rule governing athletes with substandard academic records.

And Dontae'?

"Dontae' went to class. He did what I told him to do," Ms. Buehler says. "He was there as a means to an end. And he never pretended otherwise."

The Season

Expectations were high for the 1995-96 season. ESPN televised the midnight start of preseason practice; 8,500 fans showed up at "the Hump" -- the on-campus Humphrey Coliseum -- to watch. The team was ranked No. 9 nationally before the season and won 10 of its first 11 games.

But the Bulldogs were blown out by Kentucky, lost three of their next four and fell out of the rankings. Then something changed. "Dontae' Jones took his game to another level," says Rick Stansbury, who as an assistant coach recruited every scholarship player on the 1995-96 team.



Darryl Wilson playing in Italy

The Bulldogs won the SEC's West division and reached the SEC tournament final. Their opponent: Kentucky, ranked No. 1 in the nation, Mr. Jones scored 28 points, and Mississippi State won, 84-73. It finished the regular season with a 22-7 record and a No. 19 ranking.

Seeded fifth of the 16 teams in its region, Mississippi State edged Virginia Commonwealth, 58-51, in the first round of the NCAA tournament. The players returned to their Indianapolis hotel and watched Princeton upset UCLA. "We were jumping up and down," says Jay Walton, a reserve senior

forward. In the second round, Mississippi State beat Princeton easily, 63-41.

Sweet 16 again. Lexington, Ky. The Bulldogs beat top-seeded

MARCUS BULLARD

Position: Guard
Class: Sophomore
Graduated? No
Today: In prison for drug possession

ERICK DAMPIER

Position: Center
Class: Junior
Graduated? No
Today: Plays for NBA's Dallas Mavericks

DONTAE' JONES

Position: Forward
Class: Junior
Graduated? No
Today: Playing in South Korea

RUSSELL WALTERS

Position: Forward
Class: Senior
Graduated? Yes
Today: Manages family trucking business in Laurel, Miss.

DARRYL WILSON

Position: Guard
Class: Senior
Graduated? Yes
Today: Playing in Italy

RESERVES

McKIE EDMONSON

Position: Guard
Class: Sophomore
Graduated? Yes
Today: Accountant with KPMG in Jackson, Miss.

WHIT HUGHES

Position: Forward
Class: Sophomore
Graduated? Yes
Today: Development official in Mississippi state government

BART HYCHE

Position: Guard
Class: Freshman
Graduated? Yes
Today: Dental-supplies salesman in Birmingham, Ala.

DAVID RULA

Position: Guard
Class: Freshman
Graduated? Yes
Today: Works in family construction business in Jackson, Miss.

EARLY SMITH

Position: Forward
Class: Freshman
Graduated? Yes*
Today: An admissions counselor and recruiter at Rust College in Holly Springs, Miss.

JAY WALTON

Position: Forward
Class: Senior
Graduated? Yes
Today: Assistant coach at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn.

TYRONE WASHINGTON

Position: Center
Class: Freshman
Graduated? Yes
Today: Playing in Italy

BUBBA WILSON

Connecticut, 60-55. Two days later, Mr. Jones scored 23 points in a 73-63 win over second-seeded Cincinnati. He was so dominant that at one point Mr. Williams turned to his bench and shrugged, as if to say his services weren't necessary.

Position: Center
Class: Senior
Graduated? Yes
Today: Youth counselor in Houston

**From University of Houston
Source: WSJ reporting*

Mississippi State was in the Final Four. On the flight home after the Cincinnati game, the players could see miles of car headlights backed up on the road from campus to the airport near Starkville. "We couldn't walk through the airport," Mr. Walton says. "Like we were rock stars," says McKie Edmonson, a sophomore walk-on. Fans shook the team bus.

The Final Four was at the Meadowlands in New Jersey. A pack of reporters met the players at their hotel; hundreds of fans cheered when they left for practice. "It was a frenzy," says Bart Hyche, a freshman backup point guard. "I started realizing just how big a deal it actually is." Darryl Wilson remembers Bill Cosby sitting with the Mississippi State band.

The Bulldogs faced Syracuse in one semifinal. Kentucky played Massachusetts in the other. The oddsmakers favored another Bulldogs-Wildcats meeting. "I remember thinking we were going to win the national championship," Mr. Walton says.

But Mississippi State couldn't decipher Syracuse's zone defense, committing a whopping 21 turnovers. Final score: 77-69. "To this day, I think we could play Syracuse 10 times and beat them nine out of 10," Mr. Stansbury says.

The Breakup

His pro prospects secured, Mr. Jones withdrew from school and declared for the NBA draft. "When you come from a tough home situation financially like I did, it's not hard to know that if you can make a good amount of money you had to jump at it," he says.

Would he have been academically eligible for another season? Mr. Jones admits he didn't do much schoolwork during the SEC and NCAA tournaments, but he says he would have "buckled down" if necessary. "I may not have been the highest GPA, but if I knew I was going to return I would have been eligible," he says. "Maybe take a summer class or two."

Until the NCAAs, Mr. Williams expected Mr. Jones to come back. He wasn't as sure about 6-foot-11 Erick Dampier, a soft-spoken junior center. Mr. Dampier was academically solid, but he had contemplated going pro after his sophomore year. Three weeks after Mr. Jones's announcement, Mr. Dampier left, too.



Russell Walters at his family trucking business

Two other starters were seniors. Russell Walters graduated with a degree in poultry science. Darryl Wilson was 12 credits short of a degree. Mr. Williams brought him back as a graduate assistant coach, which paid his tuition, and Mr. Wilson got his diploma the next spring.

The fifth starter was 6-foot-3 sophomore point guard Marcus Bullard.

The Failure

In April 1993, as a high-school junior, Mr. Bullard was arrested for trying to sell crack cocaine to an undercover cop. In October, he was indicted. In November, he signed with Mississippi State.

How much -- or even whether -- the team's coaches knew about Mr. Bullard's problems is unclear. But he was from Long Beach, Miss., and he could play -- all-state as a junior, 60 points in one game as a senior. In August 1994, Mr. Bullard pleaded guilty to possession and was sentenced to three years' probation. Mississippi State officials reviewed the case and allowed him to enroll that fall.

Coaches, teammates and lawyers describe Mr. Bullard as polite, intelligent and hard working. He carried a B average and was on schedule to graduate, and, they agree, was good enough for the NBA. They learned not to inquire about his troubled background -- a brother in prison, a violent father, extreme poverty, drugs.

Bart Hyche, who roomed with Mr. Bullard on the road, once asked him about his upbringing. "He said, 'Bart, man, I love you to death, but that's something I never want to talk about. Got it?' "

"He lived two lives," says Jim Davis, a lawyer who has represented Mr. Bullard.

Mr. Bullard averaged 6.4 points and 6.4 assists a game in the NCAA tournament. Four months later, Mr. Hyche dropped him off at the student union after a few games of one-on-one. Later that day, Mr. Bullard hit a student from a rival fraternity in the head with a .380-caliber pistol.

For violating probation, Mr. Bullard spent almost a year in prison. He declined an offer from Mr. Williams to return to school but not play for a year as punishment. "He felt he had paid his debt to society," says Bob Cuccaro, Mr. Bullard's high-school coach and surrogate father. Mr. Bullard enrolled at a small, non-NCAA school, but quit after he was arrested for marijuana possession. (The charge was dropped.) He declared for the 1998 NBA draft. The San Antonio Spurs were interested, Mr. Cuccaro says, but backed off.

Mr. Bullard played in a U.S. minor league, Venezuela, against the Harlem Globetrotters. But he couldn't avoid home. In 2002, when police stopped him for traffic violations on separate occasions, they found cocaine and ecstasy. Mr. Bullard pleaded guilty to possession charges and last April was sentenced to 12 years in prison. Now 30 years old, he is in the Mississippi State Penitentiary in Parchman, Miss. He couldn't be reached for comment.

Did Mississippi State fail to monitor Mr. Bullard closely enough? Should it have admitted him at all? "I have a hard time blaming anybody other than Marcus," Mr. Cuccaro says. "But I don't know if they really looked out for the kid." According to the coach, Mr. Bullard accepts responsibility for his actions.



Mr. Williams says nothing troubles him more than Mr. Bullard. He recalls meeting the player to talk in a Wal-Mart parking lot, usually after Mr. Bullard had spoken with his imprisoned brother. "He cried like a baby," Mr. Williams says. "But back on the streets with his buddies and he was a bad guy."

The coach says he felt like he failed, but also says there's only so much a college basketball program can do. "He had an opportunity to change," he says. "He didn't take advantage of that opportunity."

The Graduates

Three-fifths of the Final Four starting lineup didn't graduate. But the 10 other players on the team did, nine of them from Mississippi State.

According to NCAA data, Mississippi State had the best men's basketball graduation rate of the 1996 Final Four teams -- an average of 51% for players entering from 1990 to 1995. (Mississippi State's official rate is lower than the performance of the Final Four team because transfers, in and out, count against graduation rates.) Kentucky, the eventual champion, averaged 44%; Syracuse, 39%; and Massachusetts, 21%.

Academic reformers say a degree doesn't tell the full story. What classes did a student take? How much help did he receive? How tough was the grading?

Ms. Buehler, the Mississippi State adviser, argues that the fact of the education can be enough. "Sometimes it's a degree," she says. "Makes no difference what kind of degree." She helped Darryl Wilson fashion an interdisciplinary major combining sports and counseling. He graduated. "It was something I knew my grandparents, my mother wanted me to do," Mr. Wilson says.

Now 30, Mr. Wilson still plays basketball. His journey: Italy, Iceland, Italy, Argentina, Memphis, Tenn. (on a minor-league team coached by Mr. Williams), Italy, Israel, Italy, Italy. This season, he is in Scafati, near Naples, in the Italian league second division. "I finally hit six figures," he says.

Mr. Williams visited Mr. Wilson in Italy this winter. "I love Mississippi State," Mr. Wilson says. "It offered me an education. It took me in as part of a family. It took a chance on me when no one else ever did."

Whit Hughes, a sophomore guard in 1996, earned bachelor's and M.B.A. degrees in five years. He worked as finance director for the campaigns of Elizabeth Dole, the Republican senator from North Carolina, and Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour, and now is a trade and business-development executive for the state.

Jay Walton is an assistant basketball coach at Lipscomb University in Nashville. Bart Hyche, who got an M.B.A. from Auburn, lives in Birmingham, Ala., and works as a salesman for a dental-supplies company. McKie Edmonson got his M.B.A. from Mississippi State and is an accountant with KPMG in Jackson, Miss. Tyrone Washington, a freshman on the Final Four team, was drafted by the NBA's Houston Rockets and plays in Italy.

David Rula, a freshman guard, is a sales and project manager in his family's construction business in Jackson; he recently organized a dinner that raised \$50,000 for new digital video-editing equipment for Mississippi State's coaching staff. Bubba Wilson, a backup center, is a youth counselor in Houston. Early Smith, a redshirt freshman who didn't play in games, transferred to (and got a master's degree from) the University of Houston. He is an admissions counselor and recruiter at historically black Rust College in Holly Springs, Miss.

Russell Walters runs a family trucking company in Laurel, Miss. He played briefly in Germany and failed in tryouts for the Continental Basketball Association, a minor league. Then he hung up his high-tops. "I had a new wife and a new little boy, and I had to face the real world," he says.

Mr. Walters, 31, remembers the college sports grind: practicing twice a day, missing classes for games, working hard for B's and C's, watching "Days of Our Lives" with teammates to unwind. His one regret: not taking more care in selecting a major. "I just really didn't know what I wanted to do," he says. "I just wanted to play basketball."



Glenn James NBAE/Getty Images
Erick Dampier with the Dallas Mavericks

The Pros

Last summer, Ms. Buehler got a call from Erick Dampier. Over lunch on campus, Mr. Dampier told her he wanted to finish his studies. He had been majoring in physical education but said he "wants nothing to do with sports," Ms. Buehler says. "He wants to do business."

Mr. Dampier, 29, doesn't "need" a degree the way most college athletes do. He was the 10th pick of the 1996 NBA draft. He spent one year with the Indiana Pacers and seven with the Golden State Warriors. After a career-making season -- 12 points and 12 rebounds a game -- he signed a seven-year, \$67 million contract with the Dallas Mavericks in 2004.

Mr. Dampier is close to several Mississippi State teammates. He is the godfather of David Rula's 5-year-old son. Bart Hyche flew to Dallas last month to watch him play. (Mr. Dampier grabbed 26 rebounds.) "The fame hasn't changed him a bit," Mr. Hyche says. Adds Whit Hughes: "He just has a very large bank account now." Two years ago, Mr. Dampier created a foundation to help underprivileged children. He runs a summer basketball camp for at-risk kids near his hometown of New Hebron, Miss.

Why does he want his degree? Mr. Dampier says it wasn't clear he was NBA material until he was a sophomore. Even then, there were no guarantees. So he studied -- he made the SEC's academic honor roll the Final Four year -- and wants to finish what he started. Also, he says, "I have two little sisters. They're always talking about it: 'We're going to graduate before you.' "

Dontae' Jones's pro career hasn't been as lucrative. He was taken as the 21st pick in the first round by the New York Knicks and signed a three-year, \$2.3 million contract. When he was traded to the Boston Celtics, the team's coach called Mr. Williams to ask about Mr. Jones. "I told him he's more talented than you think, he loves to play and is fun to be around if he's getting to play," Mr. Williams says. "If he's not playing, he's miserable and will make you miserable." Mr. Williams ran into the coach a few years later. "He told me I was dead on about Dontae'," he says.

Mr. Jones admits he was frustrated by his lack of playing time. When his contract ended, no team wanted him. And the money was gone -- spent on houses, cars and vacations for family and friends; limos to practice and restaurants. "Maybe I wasn't mentally ready to handle everything it took to be an NBA player," he says.

The past six years have been a long road swing: 13 teams, six countries, four continents. La Crosse, Wis. Memphis,

playing for Mr. Williams. Naples, Italy, a championship team and playoff MVP award. Summer league with the Pacers. Training camp with the Washington Wizards. Back to Naples. A failed drug test -- marijuana -- that cost him more than half of a two-year, \$450,000 contract. Two summers in Venezuela and one in Puerto Rico. Patras, Greece. Suspended again for marijuana. Still owed \$60,000 of a \$175,000 contract with the Greek team.

Mr. Jones, 29, returned to the U.S. last year to be with his wife and infant daughter. Playing in Nashville for just \$3,000 a month, he was leading the minor-league American Basketball Association in scoring (31 points a game) when he was offered \$20,000 a month to finish the season in South Korea. His team, the SBS Stars, has won its first 15 games with him.

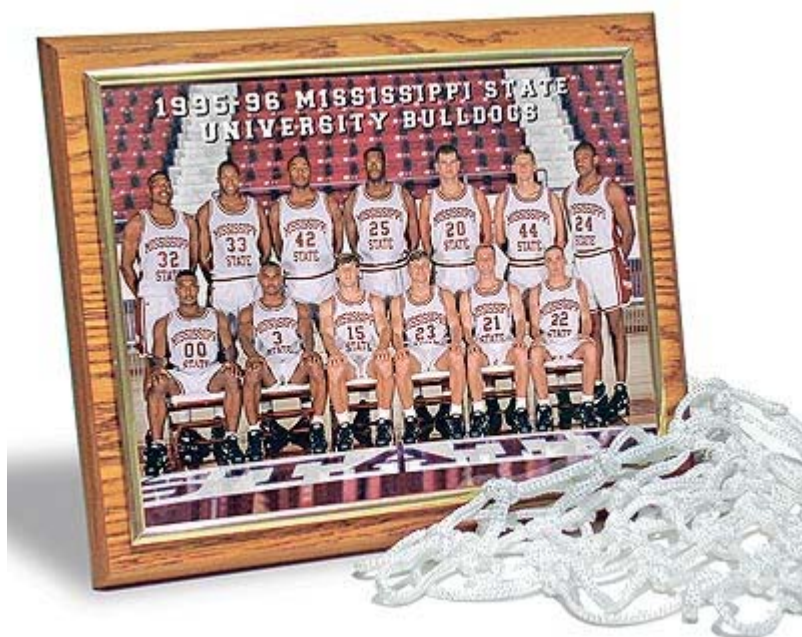
From his hotel room in the city of Anyang outside Seoul, Mr. Jones says he wants to play in the NBA again. He says he has no regrets about his career, the highlight of which is his college pit stop. "Without Mississippi State in my life, I do not become the man I am today or the basketball player I am today," he says.

Believe it or not, Mr. Jones says, he'd even like to graduate from there.

"If I get a couple of years to sit down after I'm finished basketball-wise, that would be a huge achievement," he says. "I would love to have that bachelor's, man, from that prestigious university to put on my mantelpiece, to say that I accomplished what no one ever imagined I could accomplish."

The Coach

In the best of circumstances, running a Division I program is stressful. It doesn't get easier after a Final Four. Alumni, students, administrators -- everyone expects a pipeline of Dontae' Jones-caliber recruits, and annual NCAA appearances.



The Mississippi State, 1996 NCAA Southeast Regional Champions: Standing from left to right: Dontae' Jones, Bubba Wilson, Tyrone Washington, Erick Dampier, Russell Walters, Jay Walton and Early Smith. Seated from left to right: Darryl Wilson, Marcus Bullard, Whit Hughes, David Rula, McKie Edmonson and Bart Hyche.

Richard Williams admits he already wasn't easy to be around. He was tough on players, unforgiving with himself, snappish with the media; half of the Final Four team loved him, half hated him. His subsequent teams weren't as good, on or off the court. A couple of ill-advised recruits to fill the gap left by Messrs. Jones, Dampier and Bullard ensured that.

After 12-18 and 15-15 seasons, Mr. Williams left in 1998. It was announced as a retirement, but it was a mutual decision made with the athletic director. "I was a miserable person," Mr. Williams says. "Everyone around me was miserable. I was tired of coaching."

He declined two Division I jobs. In 2000, he coached the Memphis team in the ABA. Even in a minor league that, on good nights, drew no more than a few thousand fans, Mr. Williams was bothered by losing. "I wasn't ready for it," he says.

In 2001 and 2002, he helped out during practice at a boarding school near his home. In 2003, Mr. Williams's alma mater, Pearl High School, in Pearl, Miss., outside Jackson, invited him to coach. He washed uniforms, swept the court, lunched with teachers. After 10 straight losing seasons, the team won 21 games and reached the state playoffs.

Last year, Mr. Williams coached in Jackson in the fledgling World Basketball Association, a minor league for players hoping to get invited to NBA summer leagues and training camps. Starting next month, he'll coach a team in the same league in Biloxi, Miss. He appears on a TV show about SEC basketball.

Now 59, Mr. Williams says he isn't looking to return to a college program. If he did, he'd prefer a lower-level one, "not having to compromise in the recruiting process, getting guys who understand they're not going to the NBA."

"Of course," he adds, laughing, "if somebody offered me one of those million-dollar jobs, it'd be tough say no."

The Impact

The exposure from the Final Four helped boost Mississippi State's revenue from sneaker and apparel contracts. It also gave the SEC another good TV draw.

But alumni donations didn't soar, and the university remains near the bottom of the SEC in athletics spending. According to data filed under the federal Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act, Mississippi State spent \$1.9 million on its men's basketball program in fiscal 2004. Kentucky spent \$5.7 million.

Mr. Stansbury, who succeeded Mr. Williams, has assembled consistently strong teams. In the past three NCAA tournaments, the Bulldogs were seeded second, fifth and third in their group of 16, though they didn't advance beyond the second round.

Despite losing two high-school recruits to the NBA -- and possibly a third this year -- Mississippi State lures the best in-state players. The Final Four, and recent success, has given it national cachet, too. Ten of the 13 players on the Final Four team were from Mississippi. This year's starting five is from Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, New York and Texas.

Academically, administrators say Mississippi State hasn't eased its get-a-degree message. Of the top 25 teams in a preseason poll last fall, Mississippi State had the highest graduation rate, 75%, for players who entered college from 1994 to 1998, according to data compiled by the Chronicle of Higher Education. Under a new NCAA measurement of academic performance, the current team has an expected graduation rate of around 50%.

One definite legacy of the Final Four is the changed expectation of fans who fill the Hump for nearly every home game. Says Mr. Templeton, the athletic director: "It's, 'Well, y'all'll do that every year.' "

--Mr. Fatsis is a staff reporter in The Wall Street Journal's Washington bureau.

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