

## Nice way to end a season

Written by Jim Metcalfe

Thursday, April 11, 2013 12:03 PM -

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Men's college basketball needed a game like Monday night to end the season.

With all the seemingly endless things, all negative, going on in the college world — such as the brouhaha over Rutgers head coach Mike Rice and his staff and the “stuff” going on at Auburn — we needed a great game like that to decide the men's title.

It was rather enjoyable to watch.

Some say it wasn't a “great” game — define “great” for me! — but it was a fun game, the way it should be to decide who is the best: two guys from either side —Luke Hancock from Louisville and Spike Albrecht from Michigan — going crazy and having once-in-a-lifetime games (consider the moment!) and at the same time, two superstars coming up clutch in the clutch; a crowd that sounded extremely energized and very loud; two teams playing with nothing to lose and going for it.

An aside here. I read a few articles and watched a few programs over the Mike Rice firing and it seemed as if the ones defending him were the players, the ones who were the victims of his actions.

I find that very curious. I can't really explain it unless maybe a Stockholm Syndrome-type reaction — you know, what happened to Patty Hearst when she was kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army in 1974 and then coming to sympathize with her captors.

Well, maybe they “bought” into what he was doing.

After all, I can remember a few stories — Isaiah Thomas was one — about coaches and such trying to lure recruits away (usually through their parents) from Bob Knight at Indiana because of his explosive temper and volatile nature and the response was how they were only interested in the basketball coach and not the person.

Can somebody beat UConn's women's basketball team in an NCAA final?

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Just when you thought that perhaps, the balance of power in women's college basketball had shifted away from Storrs, Connecticut, back come the Huskies to blow out both Notre Dame and upstart Louisville to claim their eighth national title under Geno Auriemma.

Man, that guy can flat-out coach.

I've written this before: he gives you the impression he is almost a dumb hick that doesn't know a lot but at heart, he is an assassin. He doesn't just want to beat you and steal your lunch money; he wants to steal your soul and cut your heart out in the process.

I'm not writing this in a bad way, either; that is almost the attitude — between the whistles and lines — you have to have to be successful at that level.

At the same time, he does have a lot of class and his players do, too, so he's doing it the right way.

Let's put it another way: I don't think you will read about a recruiting scandal for the University of Connecticut women's basketball team anytime soon.

The Fighting Irish had beaten UConn all three times this season and seven of their last eight but as the old sports maxim goes: it's hard enough to beat a team twice in the same season, let alone three times. How about four?

The Lady Cardinals had had a magic ride in this tournament, knocking off defending champion and heavy — HEAVY — favorite Baylor and long-time power Tennessee in the regional, then California in the national semis. They had some things go their way — I am sure you saw some of the playground "slop" Shoni Schimmel tossed up toward the rim, for example, in the previous games — but the magic ran out.

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How much of that was the team they were playing — they beat three very good teams, no doubt, in getting there! — in the finals and what they did and how much of that had to do with them finally “realizing where they were” and being overwhelmed in the moment?