

*Mathscapes*  
**March 2026**

**Title**

March Matchness

**Real world event**

NCAA Basketball March Madness

**Problem**

At the very beginning of the NCAA Division I men's basketball tournament, known as March Madness, there are 68 teams. Assume that all teams in the tournament are of equal ability, so the seeding becomes random and they are of equal strength. In each game, each team wins with probability  $1/2$ .

What is the probability that Team One plays Team 50 at some point in the tournament?

The structure of the NCAA tournament bracket is:

<https://www.ncaa.com/news/basketball-men/mml-official-bracket/2026-01-28/2026-ncaa-tournament-print-table-bracket-schedule-march-madness>