



Spring madness: The most extreme tornadoes of the 1990s (Round 2)

M A R C H 2 4 , 2 0 1 6 T O R N A D O I E S T O R Y

Posted March 24, updated March 31.



Lazbuddie, Texas during May 1991 (YouTube)

by *Aaron Davis and Mitch Feiler*

Editor's note (March 24): While this post is intended to be entertaining/educational, there is nothing fun about a tornado that slams into population. Sadly, many of these events killed people or otherwise destroyed lives. At the same time, as always, we believe being as informed as possible about tornadoes – including their history, and this is a great look at 1990s history – helps to keep people safer.

Additional note (March 31): The general sentiment toward this post has been in the fashion it was envisioned and posted here. A lighthearted one. Given the subject matter, perhaps that was the wrong way to go about it all. The positive to negative comment ratio has been about 50 to 1, but the negative comments all made sense and each made salient points. In retrospect, this type of idea may always be outside the highest of taste due to the fact that many of these tornadoes disastrously changed the lives of not only those impacted but the people that knew them. While we thought the 1990s was far enough removed to diminish the freshness of those scars, it's possible we erred in that conclusion. Given the fact that this was a neat idea with no sort of ill will meant, and one full of historical relevance, we will continue the tournament through conclusion as the schedule shows below. However, we will limit official advertisement from here. We apologize to anyone who was offended, that was certainly not the intent. -U.S. Tornadoes leads

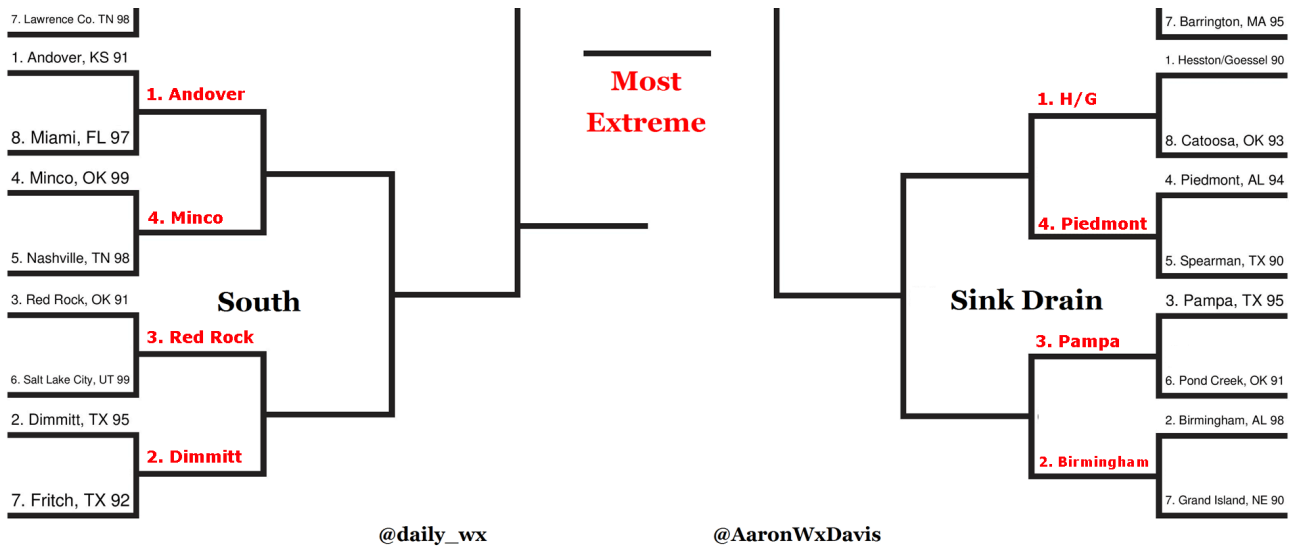
In honor of March Madness, we are proud to introduce *Spring Madness: 90s edition*.

Are you tired of looking at your already ruined March Madness (MM) bracket? Good! Then this is the perfect thing for you. We sat down and took 32 of what we thought were the most extreme tornadoes of the 1990s, gave them a seed and a bracket location, and are happy to share the final results.

On this page you will find the rules, the bracket, a write up of each tornado, and a voting option. Even if you are not a major weather junkie, we think you'll be able to play well. For Round 1, we've done a sports-style write up of each tornado to give you an idea of how the match-up could turn out. We'll try and do something like this for each round, but can't guarantee it with work schedules.

If during the course of this event you find yourself having any issues with any of the images or links, please contact [Aaron](#) or [Mitch](#).





1. Much like a standard MM bracket, you will print this one off, and fill it out on how you feel the tournament will go (or you can just look at it, it's guidance, whatever is easiest). But if you fill it out you can see how you do in the end!

2. Unlike the real MM tournament, tornadoes can't really play each other in real life (we wish) so we are leaving it up to you to decide the outcome. The bracket is set up just like a real one. So when voting, keep in mind that in this round the number one seed is playing the number eight seed, #2 VS #7, #3 VS #6, and etc.

3. Each match-up may not receive the same number of votes, though we encourage you to vote for all. You can come back later (before the deadline!) to finish. Winners will be decided on whichever tornado in each match-up has the most votes. If it's a tie, we'll be the tiebreaker.

4. There are no rules, rules are an illusion. This is a free-for-all, this is Sparta.

5. Disregard #4.



Feel free to tweet your bracket at us [@USTornadoes](#) [@AaronWxDavis](#) [@daily_wx](#) during the first round for use in the final post that announces the winner.

6 days for voting

Round 1: Thursday Mar 24 11a thru Wednesday Mar 30 10:59a

Sweet 16: Thursday Mar 31 11a thru Wednesday Apr 6 10:59a

Elite 8: Thursday Apr 7 11a thru Wednesday Apr 13 10:59a

3 days for voting

Final 4: Thursday Apr 14 11a thru Sunday Apr 17 10:59a

Tornado championship: Monday Apr 18 11a thru Thursday Apr 21 10:59a

Winner announced: Friday Apr 22 or Monday Apr 25



#1 Moore, OK 99 VS. #4 Columbus, NE 98

"I'm thoroughly convinced that the Columbus tornado was the strongest ever: this is purely conjecture, with absolutely no scientific backing, but damn was that thing strong." – Unknown Chaser

No surprise, the **Moore** tornado won in the first round, and in a landslide. This round however looks to be much, much (Moore) difficult. We know what the Moore tornado is capable of, but this storm looks to have a much stronger competitor this round.

Strength: F5

Winds: 300+ MPH

Damage: \$1 billion USD

Moore Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DG1z_llxOFo (Sorry for the documentary link)

We've seen the **Columbus** tornado in action. After doing some more digging, I have found multiple chaser recounts of that day. They were awestruck by the sheer power and intensity of this disputed F2. The mesocyclone, the hail, and the multiple stages this tornado went through will be a force to be reckoned with this round.

Strength: F2 (disputed)

Winds: 113+ MPH

Damage: Unknown

Columbus Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNOLL5tWxTg>

#1 Moore, OK 99 VS. #4 Columbus, NE 98

#1 Moore, OK 99

#4 Columbus, NE 98

VOTE

[View Results](#)

#3 Chandler, MN 92 VS #7 Lawrence Co. TN 98

In a somewhat surprising twist, **Chandler** prevented what I thought would be a surefire upset. Lazbuddie tried its best, but could not overcome the power of this massive F5. Look for it to go head to head in this round with the now not so forgotten tornado

Strength: F5

Winds: 260+ MPH estimated

Damage: \$50 million USD

Chandler Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byXvqMHHxIU>

Victorious in round one, let's see if the **Lawrence County** tornado can continue this trend. The now not so forgotten tornado will be going up against a much better known opponent. Lets see if large amounts of deforestation and ground scouring can keep this tornado in the race.

Strength: F5

Winds: 260+ MPH estimated

Damage: Unknown

Lawrenceville Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8csvBQ8Fr4U> (we can't confirm this is the tornado in question, but it seems to be!)

#3 Chandler, MN 92 VS #7 Lawrence Co. TN 98

#3 Chandler, MN 92

#7 Lawrence Co. TN 98

VOTE

[View Results](#)

#1 Andover, KS 91 VS #4 Minco, OK 99

The first tornado to advance from 1991 is, no surprise, the **Andover** tornado. This undisputed number one seed easily advanced passed the Miami tornado, and now finds itself in much better company. Look for Andover to keep its streak alive against another very powerful tornado.

Strength: F5

Winds: 260+ MPH estimated

Damage: ~\$100 million USD

Andover Videos:

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LkxRaX62Hkk>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdNImASqseM>
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sllF4R9IC18>

The **Minco** tornado was able to scoot past the Nashville tornado, but just barely. This, the potentially strongest tornado of the May 3, 1999 outbreak, advances, but straight into the sights of a fierce competitor.

Strength: F4 (disputed F5 by many witnesses to its violent nature)

Winds: 210+ MPH Estimated

Damage: Unkown

Minco Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvyr5LLJr8>

#1 Andover, KS 91 VS #4 Minco, OK 99

- #1 Andover, KS 91
- #4 Minco, OK 99



[View Results](#)

#3 Red Rock, OK 91 VS. #2 Dimmitt, TX 95

The tornado in the lab coat pitted against the tornado with the beautiful horizontal vertices. This will be a great match up.

Interesting note. Both of these tornadoes were directly studied in some way. While the Dimmitt tornado had multiple teams, the **Red Rock** tornado had a single team from OU observing it that day. This tornado though, unlike the Dimmitt tornado, went on to become a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile wide wedge. Red Rock will need that extra width if it hopes to move on to the next round.

Strength: F4

Winds: 270 MPH

Damage: Unknown

Red Rock Videos:

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hoXjHFler9w>
2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zUJJH_MSZI
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lf90f57PtZQ>

The scientific masterpiece tornado was able to easily handle the awesome Fritch, TX video and move to the next round. As the **Dimmitt** tornado continues on in the bracket, it will continue to face better and better competitors, with the Red Rock already and upgrade from its last rodeo.

Strength: F4

Winds: 207+ MPH estimated

Damage: Unknown

Dimmitt Video:

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vw6iUXnef8>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJNr3J2Q5Cg>
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHclVX27tRo>

#3 Red Rock, OK 91 VS. #2 Dimmitt, TX 95

- #3 Red Rock, OK 91
- #2 Dimmitt, TX 95

VOTE

[View Results](#)

#1 Jarrell, TX 97 VS. #5 Albion, IL 90

Anderson Hills didn't stand a chance. **Jarrell** moves in to the sweet sixteen, and is making a strong case to take the championship. However, this synoptic anomaly will have to continue with its dominant performances if it wants to truly be crowned king.

Strength: F5

Winds: 261+ MPH estimated

Damage: \$40+ million USD

Jarrell Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yc1O1d_7HPU

Jarrell is like that team that no one wants to play, and **Albion** drew the short straw. This amazing tornado is as much beautiful as it strong. The grey stovepipe, the horizontal vortices, and the flying debris all come together to make an amazing home video. Maybe it can try and charm its way out of this matchup, but chances of that are slim to none.

Strength: F4

Winds: 207+ MPH Estimated

Damage: \$10 million USD

Albion Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUq7TTRXDSc>

#1 Jarrell, TX 97 VS. #5 Albion, IL 90

- #1 Jarrell, TX 97
- #5 Albion, IL 90

VOTE

[View Results](#)

#3 Spencer, SD 98 VS #2 Plainfield, IL 90

Any "soft spot" for Spencer is easily matched by intrigue for the Plainfield event. Which is why we can't really say we have a favorite in this match up.

Spencer had no trouble getting past it's first opponent, but that event was no where near as

strong as the Plainfield tornado. Even though the main severe event that created the Spencer tornado was a long-lived derecho, the Spencer tornado probably takes the cake.

Strength: F4

Winds: 207+ MPH Estimated

Damage: \$18 million USD

Spencer Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yaz-gFKHcl>

Even with no photos or videos of the event, the **Plainfield** storm easily moved into this round. That just goes to show how powerful this storm really was. It really is hard to argue against this storm with it being such an anomaly (just like Jarrell). There must be something to these high CAPE, low shear events.

Strength: F5

Winds: 261+ MPH estimated

Damage: \$140 million USD

Plainfield Video: None. Due to the highly HP nature of this storm, and the rate in which it grew, there are no known photos or video in existence.

#3 Spencer, SD 98 VS #2 Plainfield, IL 90

#3 Spencer, SD 98

#2 Plainfield, IL 90

VOTE

[View Results](#)

#1 Hesston/Goessel, KS 90 VS. #4 Piedmont, AL 94

The twin F5's live to fight another day, and hopefully many more days. **Hesston/Goessel** advance to the sweet sixteen in another landslide against Catoosa. Every time we watch video from that day, we're reminded why these guys are an undisputed number one seed. They just contain so much power from start to finish.

Strength: Extreme F5

Winds: 300+ MPH Estimated

Damage: Yes

Hesston/Goessel Video:

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCUHtyFcRUI>

2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PsIT4_HwPiM

As for **Piedmont**, I'm actually surprised it advanced to the next round. The Spearman tornado

was beautiful from all angles, and caused relatively little damage. That is a match made in heaven for many storm chasers. I can sense a pattern with the bracket so far. Large, powerful tornadoes seem to really captivate the audience, and that is just what the Piedmont tornado is. However, it certainly will be facing a daunting task this week when asked to face the H/G terrible two.

Strength: F4

Winds: 207+ MPH estimated

Damage: Unknown

Piedmont Video: No video exists of the Piedmont tornado. However, there is a very frightening photo that can be found online.

#1 Hesston/Goessel, KS 90 VS. #4 Piedmont, AL 94

#1 Hesston/Goessel, KS

#4 Piedmont, AL 94

VOTE

[View Results](#)

#3 Pampa, TX 95 VS. #2 Birmingham, AL 98

At first there was team Edward, then along came team Jacob, now we have team **Pampa**. The Pampa video is arguably some of the best and coolest video to ever be captured. From the photogenic shape, to its debris sling nature, this tornado almost has it all. In many people's minds though, it actually does. Going forward, team Pampa will certainly be one to watch.

Strength: F4

Winds: 207+ MPH estimated

Damage: \$30 Million USD

Pampa Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KaFgUzTlFi0> (I never get tired of Texas accents)

People seemed to enjoy the James Spann, because **Birmingham** moved on. Once again, even though no videos or photos of this tornado could be found, it's intensity kept it alive in the bracket. This week will prove to be difficult for the Birmingham tornado, as it goes up against Team Pampa.

Strength: F5

Winds: 261+ MPH estimated

Damage: Unknown

Birmingham Video: We couldn't find any video of the actual tornado, so have some James Spann instead. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J5xMESViHKs>

#3 Pampa, TX 95 VS. #2 Birmingham, AL 98

#3 Pampa, TX 95

#2 Birmingham, AL 98

VOTE

[View Results](#)



Try to ignore the weird text errors in spots. The main text info came through OK at least!

Round 1 (32 tornadoes)



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<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/>

<http://www.weather.gov/>

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?>

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<http://www.newson6.com/>

<http://www.tornadohistoryproject.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/>

<http://www.spc.noaa.gov/>

<http://www.spc.noaa.gov/exper/outbreaks/>



Aaron Davis is a storm chaser and recent college meteorology graduate. He loves all things weather, and is currently trying to pursue a career in the National Weather Service. Mitch Feiler has been an avid weather enthusiast since the age of 5, and is the founder of Daily Weather Updates.

Editor's note: A previous version of the title included the word "greatest." That has been changed out for "most extreme." Greatest can be a measure of intensity/ability, as the term was used here, but it can also be misconstrued in any number of other manners.

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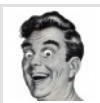


Chris Tipton says:

M A R 2
2 0 1 6

Very cool

R E P L Y



KoHoSo says:

A P R 0
2 0 1 6

Having added to this myself through my Twitter account, I also want to say I'm sorry to anybody that had this bring up bad memories or feelings. It's always a tough call for those of us that are fascinated and excited over severe weather as to where the line is between fun and seriousness. I think it has been made more difficult in recent years as those of us following this interest surround ourselves online with others who know a lot of inside jokes and references where, among this group, we know full well this is a sort of gallows humor (plus, an honest scientific interest in what storms were most impressive in categories both physical and psychological that, to outsiders, can seem as silly as arguing over whether the 1960s Packers were better than the 1980s 49'ers). Even though it was not the result for some, I hope anybody hurt by this will understand that no disrespect was intended.

R E P L Y



Ian Livingston says:

A P R

2 0 1 6

I don't think anyone meant to be disrespectful. The info in the post was/is great as well. It would have been tempting to just leave it be but we did get a note from someone who said their family was impacted by Jarrell and others also made some good points. I do think as "tornado aficionados" sometimes we can accidentally/briefly forget what they can do. They're an amazing sight to behold in addition to being quite terrible at times.

R E P L Y



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