

Lack-It-ology and Obama's Final Four (*SB News-Press* – April 5, 2014)

Here we are, wrapping up “March Madness” in college basketball, right alongside Barack Obama’s March Madness in handling everything from jobs and the economy, to domestic and foreign policy. One ends with a Final-4 of teams picked to meet in Texas this weekend. The other culminates with a sad commentary of how the president’s Final-4 years in office continue to be grossly mismanaged, in what is turning out to be 48 months of lame-duck do-nothing apathy, the extent of which this nation has never witnessed before. We all watched the print, television, and online media as he yucked it up at the White House while reviewing his NCAA bracketology – even as Russian tanks were rolling into Ukraine’s Crimean peninsula and illegally annexing it into Vladimir Putin’s retro-Soviet realignment. But it’s far more disconcerting to observe Mr. Obama’s Lack-It-ology on public display for all the world to see regarding the key issues about which America’s president should be knowledgeable and confidently leading the nation. So let’s take a look at how the president’s picks have fared in each of these realms.

On the basketball front, President Obama’s bracket got it right on just one Final-4 team: Florida – so he was 25 percent correct there, but then tanked completely with his picks of Michigan State winning the national title over Louisville. However, those low rates of success are actually much better than his miserable picks for our nation’s Final-4 years with him. Let’s review the president’s Lack-It-ology on the issues that really matter to our nation.

LEAST REGION

First, Mr. Obama started this region with 20 issues that should be at the top of every president's to-do list. But he community-organized those into his "first-four" that had to battle in a preliminary round just to see if they could get any of his attention in this initial regional line-up. These included: 1) fixing/reducing the payroll tax, 2) fixing/eliminating the alternative minimum tax (AMT), 3) fixing/reducing the capital gains tax, and 4) fixing/eliminating the inheritance tax. The payroll tax and the AMT made it through but lost in his next round to third-seeded *Reforming the U.S. Postal Service*, and the 4th seed *Debt-Ceiling Sequester*. These then joined #2 seed Airline Emissions and top-seeded Online Poker regulations in his Sweet-16. The president picked the Post Office and Online Poker in the Least Regional final, with web-based nationwide slots the first to advance into the hallmark of Obama's Final-4 (years).

FAR EAST REGION

Next came the president's most troublesome geographic alignment, where his four Far-Easterners that made his overall Sweet-16 included: 14th-seeded Pyongyang missile launches taking on #10 Kabul-Taliban negotiations (which upset #7 Damascus), while top-seeded Tehran nuclear concessions squared off against #5 Beijing currency intervention. It's too bad that #16 Kenya's paperwork was not in official order so it was automatically disqualified from formal participation. The president then ignored Kim Jong-un, while simultaneously ignoring Hassan Rouhani in this region's final, with North Korea moving into Obama's Final-4.

MIDWEST REGION

This region's top-seeded Keystone pipeline project has clearly been the crowd favorite nationwide for a very long time, but for some reason Mr. Obama continues to argue it should have been aligned in the Least

Region and a first-round showdown with Permanent Normal Trade Relations with Russia. The true *March Madness* turned out to be that the president picked this jobs-and-energy rich venture to lose in the opening round to his infamous Russian Reset Button – relegating the Canadian-American joint initiative to “one and done.” After the first two rounds, the four issues making the president’s Sweet-16 were: #3 Second Stimulus Package, #5 Online Sales Tax, #8 Mortgage Forgiveness Debt Relief, and the region’s #2 seed, the Chicago presidential library exploratory search-committee – which obviously became the third issue to make Obama’s Final-4.

WEST REGION

In his remaining regional Lack-It, Mr. Obama had number-1 Hollywood (where he raised over \$262 million for his 2012 re-election campaign) trouncing 16th-seeded Mexican Border Security, and then joining #3 Disneyland, #4 Magic Mountain, and #7 Universal Studios in his Sweet-16. He then picked Universal to upset Disney, but then it would lose badly to Hollywood – which was his last pick to the Final-4. It’s interesting and worth noting that the region’s 15th-seeded “Retail Gas Prices At The Pump” was picked as the overwhelming number-1 issue among consumers and businesses throughout the western states, but Obama had \$4.19/gallon exiting in the first round to the second-seed: “Which Actor Will Portray Obama In The First Feature Film About His Presidency After He Leaves Office In January 2017”?

So Obama’s Lack-It-ology leaves the American people with the remainder of his Final-4 years pared down to: Online Poker regulations, North Korean missile tests, the Chicago presidential library exploratory search committee, and more Hollywood fundraising – with the president picking Chicago and Hollywood to meet head-to-head, but he also picked this to result in an unprecedented tie for first place as the two issues

he'll devote his time and energy to from now on. And while he was 25 percent correct on his Final-4 basketball picks (and completely missed the championship game), a quick tally of President Obama's other picks for his Final-4 years (going back to January 2013) show that he's gotten what should have been his #1-jobs, #2-economy, #3-foreign and #4-domestic policy issues correct...never!

Whether in his forthcoming manuscript: "Leading From Behind," his self-help video: "Drawing Red Lines," or his repeated tweets: "See, The 2009 Stimulus Is Working," the president has consistently had upside down priorities, picked the incorrect issues, and made the wrong decisions. The result? Record debt at 106 percent of GDP, an on-going saga of a "job-starved recovery", high oil prices and no clear national energy policy, more and more regulations and taxes, continued contempt for our Constitution's limitations on presidential executive powers, a U.S. military gutted to pre-WWII levels, and ironically "strong" signals sent out almost weekly to the rest of the world about just how "weak" America has become on President Obama's watch. Truly, March Madness.