**[Who's this year’s VCU?](http://buzzerbeater-hoops.blogspot.com/2012/03/whos-this-years-vcu.html)**

 Last year, Virginia Commonwealth captured the attention of the entire nation, as the Rams made a magical run from the First Four to the Final 4. The Rams are back in the field this year, but are not the same team, and will find it much tougher to reach the Final 4 this year. So that begs the question, who is this year’s VCU? You don't have to look deep into the field to find the team, simply look at where last year’s VCU team started in the NCAA tournament and you will have your answer.

 A little over a week ago, the Iona Gaels season seemed like a total waste. The high scoring Gaels, whose minimum goal was a MAAC tournament title and NCAA berth, were defeated in the semifinals of their conference tournament, and seemed a long shot for an at large berth. Head coach Tim Cluess thought his team still deserved in. "Obviously I believe we deserve it," Cluess said to reporters following the upset. "... I don't think because you get knocked off in your playoff game that everything you did all season long should be thrown out the window. We had a very good RPI (38). To me, if that's not going to get you an at-large bid, then what's the sense of ever having a schedule like that? … So I'm hopeful that the NCAA looks at that and rewards us for it." Every "bracketoligist" had the Gaels on the outside looking in. The committee however did not. The Gaels sneaked into the field of 68, and were by far the most surprising team to make the tournament. Sound familiar? Over the past few days, and going forward, the Gaels will hear why they don't belong in the field of 68. Why Drexel was a better mid major candidate. Why Seton Hall played a tougher schedule and everything in between. Cluess will have this bunch motivated, and that's scary, because the Gaels are not your typical MAAC team.

 Scott Machado is a NBA point guard. The slick senior leads the nations with 9.9 assist per game, and can get his own shot. He is the type of player who can carry a team in a single game elimination tournament; much like Steph Curry did years back with Davidson. Here's the scary part, his back court mate is no slouch either. MoMo Jones played the Robin role to Derrick Williams Batman last March as Arizona had a surprise run to the elite 8. Jones transferred home this past summer to be closer to his ailing Grandmother, and gave Iona one of the best guard tandems in the country. These two will be a handful, but they aren't Iona's only weapons. Mike Glover is a undersized forward who can really score. He leads the team with 18.5 points per game. Because of the great guards, he doesn't get the credit he deserves, but teams will soon find out he is just as dangerous. These 3 will give Iona a great shot to make a run, and much like VCU last year they will start their quest in the First Four Tuesday (tonight) vs BYU on truTV. The game is a play-in for a 14 seed, which will make the winner’s job a lot harder than VCU had last March. Due to BYU's religious request (they don't play sports on Sunday, so they can't be put in any Friday/Sunday locations) this game was forced to be a 14 seed play-in. In reality this there teams are around a 12 seed.



 I expect the Gaels to make some major noise in the tournament, and can see them making a Sweet 16 appearance easily. They match up well with BYU and should cruise past the Cougars in the First Four. Marquette will be a big challenge; but not one the Gaels will shy away from. Cluess said his team is better than the 8th and 9th team in the Big East, and they will get a chance to prove that vs a top tier Big East opponent. The good news for Iona; the Golden Eagles are an undersized Big East team, and Iona will have the better guards. That back court will gives them a chance in almost every game they play. The Gaels high powered offense will be a sight to see this March, and next year, we will all be wondering, "who will be this year’s Iona?"