Final Four Showdowns: March Brandness Narrows the Field

This post was created in partnership with Nativo.

Eight brands entered Round Two, but only four earned their spot in the Final Round of the Brand Madness competition, powered by Nativo's Brand Rank. Over 1,000 U.S. shoppers weighed in to determine results, picking the brands they're most likely to buy.

Still in the game:
Coca-Cola, Great Clips, TurboTax, and Home Depot

Eliminated:
Capital One, Geico, Bonvoy, and Reese's

Greg Friend, vp of strategy & innovation at Nativo, offered his breakdown of what pushed the top four brands through—and what tripped up the ones heading home.

"Great Clips pulls away from Geico in the 4th quarter for a decisive win!"

This one was closer than it looked—for a while. Geico opened strong with deep brand recognition and a playbook full of memorable ads. But when it came time for consumers to make an actual choice, Great Clips pulled ahead in the 4th quarter like a team that's been here before.

"It's a simple truth: getting a haircut is a low-friction, low-consideration decision," Friend said. "Most people do it every few weeks without much thought. That works in Great Clips' favor. They're easy to access, priced right, and they deliver consistency. When a brand makes it easy to say yes,

they win.”

Meanwhile, Geico faced the challenge of a more complex category. “Insurance is high-friction. It’s not something people love to shop for—it’s a headache. You’ve got price comparisons, different types of coverage, uncertainty about what you need. Even if Geico is well-known, that mental friction slows things down,” he explained. “That hesitation can cost you.”

In the end, Great Clips played a clean, confident game. They showed up, stayed steady, and sealed the win when it counted.

“Home Depot outmuscles Reese’s in a clash of crowd favorites!”

Reese’s didn’t go down without a fight. The beloved candy brand brought a deep bench—classic cups, seasonal shapes, Big Cups, minis—and racked up a solid 33%, a score that would’ve beaten many others in the tournament. But this matchup wasn’t about weakness. It was about running into a wall.

“Home Depot continues to be the most dominant brand in the bracket,” Friend said. “Reese’s showed up strong, but Home Depot has something that’s hard to beat: trust built through repeated, essential use. When people need tools, materials, or help with a project, they default to Home Depot. That top-of-mind position isn’t built overnight.”

He added, “Reese’s has emotional equity, for sure—it’s nostalgic, it’s reliable, it brings joy. But they were up against a brand that owns its category. The utility and frequency of Home Depot’s role in people’s lives gave them the edge.”

It’s the kind of loss you chalk up to the bracket draw. On another day, against another opponent, Reese’s could’ve made a deeper run. This time, they just ran into the tournament’s front-runner.

The Final Four is set, and the remaining matchups couldn’t be more different.

Coca-Cola vs. Great Clips pairs long-standing emotional resonance with everyday practicality.
TurboTax vs. Home Depot pits tax-season relevance against year-round necessity.

The pressure’s on—and it’s anyone’s game from here.

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