

WILLIAMS LEAPS, LANDS SECOND

Williams turned heads and TV remotes in NCAA dunk contest

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"That is just sick," exclaimed one of the announcers at the 2011 NCAA Final Four dunk contest. He had just witnessed UNC Asheville senior **John Williams** leap over Memphis' 6-foot-9-inch center Will Coleman and perform a dunk that nearly disproved the existence of gravity.

In addition to being an expert dunker, Williams is UNCA's all-time leader in blocked shots. He consistently contributes points in double digits and dominates the boards like no other. The 6-foot-4-inch, 215 lb forward is a force to be reckoned with, and undoubtedly one of the most exciting players in UNCA history.

Last Thursday, Williams went to the Hofheinz Pavilion in Houston to represent the Bulldogs in a dunk con-



John Williams

test against seven other NCAA basketball players from around the country. The judging panel included NBA legends Karl Malone and Calvin Murphy.

"Being around all these players and being at the Final Four was an incredible experience. It was something I'll never forget," Williams said.

The eight contestants battled head to head in a quarter, semi-final and final structure, diminishing in numbers as the contest progressed. Williams displayed some challenging and creative maneuvers and made every dunk on the first attempt, earning him second place in the contest.



Photo courtesy of UNCA Athletics

Senior John Williams dunks in a home game this season. He clinched second place Thursday at the NCAA dunk competition.

"The thing I'm most proud of is that I got to wear the Bulldogs uniform one more time and represent UNC Asheville at this prestigious event."

John Williams
Men's basketball player

He began his turn with a wraparound windmill dunk that started from behind the basket, earning a score of 46 out of 50 from the judges.

Possibly the most notable dunk by Williams was his second one, the epic "candle in the wind," in which the UNCA forward blew out a candle in mid-air moments before grabbing the ball held up by another contestant on a ladder. This dunk received a 49.

"John Williams just tore it up. I definitely think he should have won the contest," UNCA junior **Kent Rankin** said.

Williams' third dunk, where he hopped over Memphis' Will

Coleman and secured a perfect 50, brought to mind the insane exhibition of vertical prowess at last October's Jammin' at the Justice when Williams jumped over both 7-foot-2-inch center

Sean Hobbs and 6-foot-1-inch guard J.P. Primm before he executed a strong two-handed dunk.

Then there was Williams' final dunk. While in the air,

he brought the ball below his waist and then above his head to finish out the dunk. Williams continued hanging onto the rim by his elbow for about 10 seconds after slamming it through, while the other contestants ran onto the court to congratulate him.

"I thought my last dunk was a winner. I haven't seen anyone else do that," Williams said.

Jacob Tucker, a 5-foot-11-inch viral sensation from Illinois College with a supposed 50-inch vertical leap, edged past Williams 50-46 on the final dunk to win the contest.

see UNCA on page 12