

SPORTS

# Tar Heels face No. 2 Volunteers in Mideast semis

By Zachary Albert  
Assistant Sports Editor

It was as if Carrie McKee saw it coming. The UNC sophomore almost overlooked the Tar Heels' March 21 opening-round matchup with Alabama, prematurely claiming she was looking forward to meeting top-seeded Tennessee in the regionals.

"I can't wait to play Tennessee," McKee said in a March 16 press conference.

McKee never got the chance to taste those words, as she helped the Tar Heels come from behind to ebb the Crimson Tide, 74-73.

North Carolina had not claimed a spot in the Sweet 16 since 1986. The overtime win changed all that.

When UNC sophomore guard Stephanie Lawrence canned a 3-pointer, her only bucket of the day, in the waning seconds of the extra session, the cliffhanger was solved. When the Vols upended Northwestern 89-66 in its tournament opener, the stage was set.

The 18th-ranked UNC women's basketball team has something to prove tonight. The upstart Tar Heels hope to earn the role of giant-killer against a perennial women's hoops powerhouse in the NCAA Mideast Regional in Iowa City, Iowa.

The No. 2 Volunteers swagger into the Carver-Hawkeye Arena with a highly-acclaimed history of tournament highlights. Tennessee has garnered 12 NCAA berths in as many years, along with seven Final Four appearances and three national championships.

North Carolina, however, has not enjoyed similar success in post-season play, posting a 3-6 all-time record since the program's inception in 1975.

Tennessee romped through the SEC regular season, winning all 11 contests, until stumbling in the conference finals to No. 1 Vanderbilt. The Tar Heels finished third in the ACC, compiling an 11-5 record against conference foes.

In all previous meetings with the Vols, UNC has triumphed once in 11 tries. That victory came seven years ago

in Carmichael Auditorium.

What does this all mean? UNC guard Tonya Sampson says nothing. "On any given night, any team can be beaten."

UNC head coach Sylvia Hatchell expresses the same sentiments, but for her, the complexion of the game takes on a much more personal meaning.

Hatchell and Vols coach Pat Summitt both attended Tennessee graduate school from 1974-75. While Summitt signed on as coach of the varsity squad, Hatchell coached the JV team.

"Pat and I are very good friends," Hatchell said. "We talk a lot, we went to school together, but when we go out on the floor, all that will be forgotten."

Hatchell will rely on the big-game play of Sampson, who leads the team and the ACC in scoring, piling up 21.2 points per game. After a recent bout with bronchitis, Ms. Clutch bounced back to tally 30 points against the Tide.

The Tar Heel frontcourt boasts 6-foot-0 forward Charlotte Smith and 6-5 junior Sylvia Crawley. Smith chips in 15.2 points per contest and leads the squad in boardwork, husking in 9.2 rebounds per game.

On the other side of the court, Tennessee stacks the frontcourt with 6-0 Lisa Harrison at one forward slot. The senior leads the team in scoring and rebounding, averaging 14.3 points and 9.5 boards per outing. Peggy Evans and Dana Johnson alternate at center, combining for 23 ppg and 12 rpg.

Backcourt skills are the forte of sophomore guard Tiffany Woosley, who contributes 11.5 ppg and a team-high 31.7 minutes per contest. The 5-foot-6 Woosley has also shown range from

beyond the arc, knocking down 43 treys on the season.

While the matchup may be tabbed as the new stranger versus the town bully,

UNC hopes to use this game as a springboard to NCAA clout. Anything can happen, says Sampson. Who knows ...

Thursday, 7:30 p.m., WCHL-AM Iowa City, Iowa		UNC VS. TENNESSEE
The Lowdown		
<b>Backcourt</b>	UNC point-guard Jill Suddreth (6.1ppg) has shown she can bring the ball up the court, but hasn't been a consistent offensive force. Senior Toni Montgomery has earned the start at off-guard, but is also gun-shy. Tar Heel reserve Stephanie Lawrence has shown she can nail the clutch three. The Vols' Tiffany Woosley (11.5 ppg) should shine.	
<b>Frontcourt</b>	With 6-foot-5 Sylvia Crawley at center, and 6-0 high-jumping forward Charlotte Smith, UNC carries a distinct advantage into the paint. However, height (or lack thereof) is a problem for the 6-foot duo of forward Lisa Harrison and center Peggy Evans, who rank 1-2 in scoring for the Vols. Tonya Sampson can dominate a big game.	
<b>Depth</b>	The Tar Heels may be in for a workout. North Carolina's top reserves Lawrence, Gwendolyn Gillingham and Carrie McKee, combine for only 15.0 ppg. Outside of these three, nobody else plays any real minutes. While UNC has three players that net more than 30 minutes per game, only one Volunteer plays better than half an hour.	
<b>Coaching</b>	Sylvia Hatchell has done an excellent job of turning the Tar Heel program into an ACC contender. However, in her seven-year tenure, Hatchell has managed only one victory in three NCAA tries. The Vols Pat Summitt owns more wins than any other coach in the brackets: 34-8, seven Final Fours, three national crowns. Enough said.	
<b>Intangibles</b>	OK, so Tonya Sampson isn't an intangible, but her game is. As Sampson goes, so go the Tar Heels. Also, UNC has nothing to lose, and everything to prove. If the players can maintain their composure, North Carolina could make things interesting. However, UT could be on a Final Four mission after losing to Georgia in the SEC tournament.	

Tennessee 86, UNC 72

—Compiled by Zachary Albert

## Cremins returns to Gamecocks

The Associated Press  
COLUMBIA, S.C. — Bobby Cremins resigned as basketball coach at Georgia Tech on Wednesday to run the program at South Carolina, his alma mater.

"I would like to end my college career where I started it, and that's right here in Columbia," Cremins said.

The 45-year-old coach led the Gamecocks to national recognition as a player in the late 1960s. He spent 12 years at Georgia Tech, compiling a 240-135 record. Cremins' overall record is 340-205.

Cremins replaces Steve Newton, who resigned Jan. 18 when an internal report detailed five secondary NCAA violations.

"The past few days have been very trying for me," Cremins said. The coach said he talked with former USC coaches George Felton and Frank McGuire before accepting the job.

"I wanted to come, but the players and the Georgia Tech people were holding me back" because of their pleas for him to stay, Cremins said.

A published report had said most of the Tech players called Cremins Monday night in an attempt to persuade him to stay.

Cremins was met with applause from a large crowd that jammed a university lounge as he entered the news conference. "I hope you're still clapping after the first year," he said.

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## Fond goodbyes to Duke's monopoly of NCAA news

Pardon me while I wipe a few tears off the keyboard. The Midwest Region plays its semifinals tonight, and the Duke Blue Devils are a notable absentee.

Duke seniors Bobby Hurley and Thomas Hill have played their last basketball game as collegians, falling short of their accustomed perch atop the basketball world. The fall of the Berlin Wall got less press coverage.

Hundreds of seniors laced up their sneakers last fall to play their last season of college hoops. As of now, only two of those have national championship rings.

Hurley and Hill are those two. They'll both be playing at the next level this fall, making more money in a few seasons than I'll ever see in my pathetic existence, and they both have the most cherished prize in the sport — twice over. My heart bleeds.

According to the media, it should. When I awoke Sunday morning, content that Jason Kidd and company had ensured that I wouldn't have to hear any Dookie lauding until November, the media charades were far from over. In fact, they had just begun.

There was the Camelot squad and their coach hogging the TV screen yet again. There was that Mike Krzyzewski press conference over and over again. And there were the announcers feeling sorry for him. A virtual Duke eulogy.

This is no knock on Krzyzewski. All but two coaches (the NCAA and NIT champs) must comfort seniors who conclude their careers on a losing note, and that elicits emotion.

But Krzyzewski is certainly not alone in having to deal with it — it's not a novelty, it's a part of every college sport.

This is a knock on the media. The canonization of Duke has become addictive, and it's snowballing. The Blue Devils now become a story even when they're not.

The Cal win was deemed the biggest upset of the tournament. Many teams will (and should) take offense to that statement.

A decent at best Duke team with little depth, which lost eight games and its ACC tourney first-round game, falling to a strong California squad from a tough conference is not the upset of the tournament. A sixth seed over a third seed? Please.

How about Western Kentucky? The Hilltoppers, who lost their top two scorers from a mediocre season ago, beat

Seton Hall, a team many people picked to win the whole thing.

Southern? The Jaguars, sporting 10 first- or second-year players, spanked ACC-champ Georgia Tech by 15 after being down by 14.

George Washington? The Colonials were, get this, 1-27 just four seasons ago. Now they are in the Sweet 16 after two convincing tournament wins.

And what about, for God's sake, Santa Clara? The Broncos fell to Stanford, the last-place team in the Pac 10, by 31 earlier in the season. But they beat Pac-10 champ Arizona in the first round, becoming just the second 15th seed to top a No. 2 seed in the NCAAs.

But these teams got less press in the thrill of victory than Duke got in the contrived agony of defeat. Why? Reporters cited emotion. Reporters cited class.

Duke had lost, yes, but look how much class they showed in defeat! They're still the program everyone looks up to! They do it both on the court and in the classroom!

Wow. I'd never seen emotion in a hoops game before. I never knew Krzyzewski pioneered the term "student-athlete". I never knew I'd find the Laettner, Parks and Hurleys of the world next to the definition of "class" in Webster's.

You want emotion? Try Santa Clara. Try Southern. Try George Washington. Or even Rider. That's why they invite 64 teams — to give lesser-known programs the ultimate high, a chance to channel all their emotions into scaring the big-time programs.

You want class? Try Southern coach Ben Jobe, 60, who, after the biggest win of his life, told a reporter that he hated to beat his former coaching roommate Bobby Cremins because "he needs this more than I do, I'm old and on my way out."

That's class and that warrants more credit and attention than that school in Durham losing a basketball game.

Reminds me of another coach from these parts that doesn't get as much credit as he deserves. And he's still in the tournament.



**Carter Toole**  
Assistant Sports Editor

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