

Final Four Recap

JOHN ZHANG

The final four was once again an exciting and memorable event. Texas, Marquette, Kansas, and Syracuse proved to be excellent teams that had a chance of a lifetime in competing for the national championship. Here's a look back at the action and final thoughts on each team.

1. Texas - Coach Rick Barnes has the Longhorns' program on the rise, and with the funds of a big sports school such as Texas, they will be looking to compete for a national championship for years to come. Defeated by eventual champion, Syracuse, Texas could not overcome the sensational Carmelo Anthony, who had 33 points and 14 rebounds in the Longhorns' defeat. TJ Ford, player of the year in many publications,

wrapped up a MVP year with a 12 point, 13 assist final. Be sure to look out for him next year as his team will be loaded with depth and talent. Texas played in its first final four in almost 50 years, and should reverse this trend in the future.

2. Marquette - Marquette could not do anything to stop the powerful Jayhawks fast break, as they were blown out by Kansas, 94-61, the fourth most lopsided game in Final Four history. Tom Crean is an excellent young coach that should lead Marquette to numerous NCAA appearances. If "All-American Dwayne" Wade returns, the Golden Eagles will be solid in Conference USA.

3. Kansas - With a blowout victory over Marquette in the regional final, many publications were

Burning up the track this year for NCSSM is Jared Hill. Jared is an avid runner and a leader for both Cross Country and Track. His favorite sport between the two is Cross Country and he placed sixth at the state championship last fall with a time of 16:49. This spring, he has again qualified for the state meet for the 800 m, 1600 m, and 3200m. Some of his records for fastest time include: 4:42 for the mile,

predicting a win for Roy Williams' Jayhawks. Instead Kansas like the previous Big 12 teams could not stop the Syracuse freshman. Not only did they suffer a heart-wrenching loss to Syracuse in the final, but Lawrenceville also eventually lost Williams, the coach that built Kansas into a powerhouse, to UNC. After the defeat, a reporter asked Williams about the UNC job, and with emotions

10:18 for the two-mile, and 2:09 seconds for the 800 m. As a senior, Jared Hill hopes to pursue a career in math or physics at Wake Forest next year. During his free time, he enjoys playing soccer, reading books, playing spades, and listening to classical music. Jared says that "when you step onto the track, you can't see the finish line, you should feel it. And when you're running, if you feel pain, then when you step off the track, you will be that much closer to victory".



Dane Emmerling

overpowering him, Williams cursed at the reporter. Kansas' future is in doubt, as both star seniors depart along with their head coach.

4. Syracuse - Sweet victory! Syracuse, a number 3 seed pulled off upset after upset. The youth and talent of Syracuse, the 2-3 zone, and the freshman phenomenon Carmelo Anthony cemented their place in history with a

string of victories over top Big 12 teams, Oklahoma, Texas, and Kansas. No team could stop Anthony, as he reeled dominating performances game after game against the top teams in the nation. Coach Jim Boeheim, also deserves a lot of credit, finally proving his critics wrong. Watch out for Syracuse if Anthony comes back next year. Orange crush!

F.I.R.S.T. Robotics: *To infinity and beyond*

BY: JUDY HE

FI.R.S.T. - For Innovation and Recognition of Science and Technology-was founded by Dean Kamen a decade ago to inspire "in young people, their schools and communities an appreciation of science and technology, and of how mastering these can enrich the lives of all."

For the 2003 NCSSM team-Team -this meant that immediately after winter break, they were greeted with a basic kit of parts, including assorted motors, sensors, shafts, bearing and other materials, valued at over \$5000. Assisted by mentors, a handful of students worked in the depths of the Cyber Cellar to build the perfect robot for the competition...in six weeks.

Every year, the competition "game" is different; this year, it was called "Stack Attack." During this game, players start on a field 24 feet wide by 54 feet long. There are rails on the side and a ramp with a line of boxes in the middle. Each round features four teams facing off against each other in two groups. For the first 15 seconds, robots function autonomously. Then the rest of the game is spent co-oper-

ating your ally to bring boxes over to your side. Points are calculated by the multiplication of the number of boxes in the highest stack with the number of other boxes on your side.

Achieving the highest score on the surface is only a max/min problem of the Advanced Functions and Modeling and TI-93 caliber. However, the rapidly changing constraints necessitate a combination of defensive, aggressive, and constructive strategies which in turn yields startling and exciting gameplay.

As Dr. Britton, one of the sponsors, said, "This competition is ALMOST as exciting as building the electric car and racing it at the Richmond Speedway back in the early '90's."

The parts for the 2003 robot were picked up during winter break at Virginia Commonwealth University. In the month that followed, mentors from Glaxo-SmithKline and alumni from NCSU spent hours every week soaking up gears and glory. After Valentine's day, the robot was christened Frito and shipped off to VCU in preparation for the competition early in March.

While the team did not pick up any honors at VCU,

the robot gained a new name, Hannibal, and a reputation for breaking other robots. With the VCU Regional Competition in Virginia as a testing ground and a timely grant from the Executive Director, the team was able to go to the Peachtree Regional Competition in Atlanta where they placed in the top third of the competition and finished in 5th with their Alliance. Though the team didn't place high enough for the national

competition, they promise, "We WILL go national next year!!!"

Besides fame, glory, and the adulation of RoboGeeks everywhere, participants have a chance to win prize money. Or, like Steve Butcher ('02), a scholarship for college.

So for juniors who want action and adventure, a brand new robot needs to be built! Not only are there electronics to be wired, a lift mechanisms to invent, drive trains to craft,

and programs to write but also CAD simulations to render, a website to maintain, team shirts and gear to create, money to raise and outreach programs to develop.

Want to join?

Email Jenny Bo (boj@ncssm.edu) or sponsors Angelina Winborne (winborne@ncssm.edu) or Chuck Britton (britton@ncssm.edu) to join.



The 2002-2003 NCSSM F.I.R.S.T. Robotics team.

02-03 F.I.R.S.T Robotics Team