

# 'Cats Seek Revenge, Others Want Respect in Final Four

BY KURT TONDORF  
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Just imagine how Kentucky feels now. If everything falls into place on upcoming Final Four weekend in the Meadowlands, Rick Pitino's Wildcats will get their chance at redemption against the only two teams to beat them all season: Massachusetts, which Kentucky faces in Saturday's semifinal, and Mississippi State, if the Bulldogs can get past Syracuse in the other.

But while Kentucky has something to prove this weekend, so do the Minutemen and Bulldogs. Neither UMass nor MSU wants to have its regular season win vs. the 'Cats passed off as a fluke, and both teams

want the respect they rightly deserve for beating Kentucky.

## Kentucky (32-2)

It's been a smooth postseason ride for Pitino's troops, though their 28.3-point average margin of victory is not quite as high as the 31-point margin the 'Cats used to reach the 1993 Final Four.

Antoine Walker has been posting magical numbers (16 ppg, 8.5 rpg, 4.5 apg), but it was his defense on Wake center Tim Duncan that really turned heads.

Walker held Duncan to just three first-half shots in Kentucky's 83-63 drumming of the Deacs.

The 'Cats come at teams with a full-

court press, but now the pressure falls on their shoulders—to beat UMass.

## UMass (35-1)

UMass' matchup with Georgetown was supposed to be the game of the tournament.

But it turned into a disaster for the Hoyas, who connected on only 35 percent of their shots.

If any two guards can pick apart the Kentucky press, it's the combination of

Edgar Padilla and Carmelo Travieso. The two juniors dismantled the Hoyas' hounding pressure with ease—a good tune-up for their meeting with Kentucky.

Then there's Marcus Camby. Can Walker shut him down like he did Duncan? It's doubtful. Camby's small-forward quickness will help him against KU's double teams, as he is more apt than Duncan to face Kentucky defenders and take them off the dribble.

It's now or never for the Minutemen. Camby will likely leave after this season, and his frontcourt mates Dana Dingle and Donta Bright are set to graduate.

UMass coach John Calipari has never had this much talent in one season, and he

isn't about to let his club suffer a letdown.

## Mississippi State (26-7)

The Bulldogs are the lowest-seeded team since Michigan in 1992 to reach the Final Four, and they've done it by earning tough wins against Connecticut and Cincinnati in the Southeast Regional.

MSU's Cinderella story has a simple plot: win with defense. The SEC champs are holding teams to 34 percent shooting, tops among the remaining teams. In the middle of a very physical frontcourt, there's 6-11, 268-pound Erick Dampier, who's averaging 3.2 blocks per game this season.

The Bulldogs' offensive attack is three-pronged, with Dampier, 6-7 forward

Dontae Jones and 6-1 guard Darryl Wilson accounting for 74 percent of the team's tournament point total.

## Syracuse (28-8)

Syracuse forward John Wallace did what few thought anyone could: he found a reason for underclassmen to stay in school, carrying the Orangemen to their first Final Four berth since 1987. MSU will be hard-pressed to stop Wallace. He is one of the most versatile players in the country, averaging 20.3 points per game.

**Prediction:** Mississippi State will muscle past Syracuse 63-56, while UMass will upset Kentucky 81-74. And the title game? Look for UMass to win it all.



## Brother Says Marbury Will Go Pro; Announcement Set for Next Week

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Is one season at Georgia Tech enough to convince Stephen Marbury he's ready to play in the NBA?

One of Marbury's older brothers said the freshman guard will enter the NBA draft, but Yellow Jackets coach Bobby Cremins insists Marbury is still considering his options.

"No, Stephen has not made the final decision," Cremins said Thursday as he arrived in New York for the Final Four and a gathering of the National Association of Basketball Coaches. "Everything I've been

hearing about caught me totally off guard. We are in the exploratory stage right now."

Cremins said an announcement about Marbury's future will be made Tuesday or Wednesday.

Donald Marbury Jr., one of Stephen's three brothers, told the Daily News in New York the decision already has been made.

"He's definitely coming out," Donald Marbury said. "That's what he wants to do. He said, 'That's my dream. I just want to follow my dream.'"

ESPN and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution also said Marbury would enter the

June draft. Underclassmen have until May 12 to announce their intentions to the NBA.

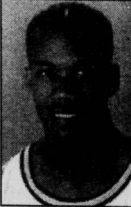
Marbury, 19, has said repeatedly he wouldn't enter the NBA draft unless he was assured of being a top five pick.

But an NBA scout, speaking on condition he not be identified, said there's no definite way to determine Marbury's draft standing because there are several top underclassmen who haven't decided whether to leave school, including All-Americans Marcus Camby, Tim Duncan, Allen Iverson and Ray Allen.

Before arriving in New York, Cremins spent three days talking with Marbury. He said they would continue their discussions with NBA officials while in the city for the Final Four, which is being held in neighboring East Rutherford, N.J.

Marbury could not be reached for comment but said several weeks ago that he didn't think the transition to the NBA would be difficult. As a freshman, he averaged 18.9 points and 4.4 assists per game, leading the Yellow Jackets to the ACC regular-season title and their first trip to the NCAA tournament since 1993.

"For me, the NBA game will be a lot easier than college," Marbury said. "In college, they play all these trick defenses: the box-and-one, the triangle-and-two. In the NBA, it's strictly one-on-one. If you can go one-on-one, play defense and catch the ball, you can go there and be successful in the NBA."



Georgia Tech's STEPHON MARBURY may opt for the NBA.

## Runberg Garners All-America Honors at NCAAs

STAFF REPORT

North Carolina sophomore Trevor Runberg raced to a seventh-place finish in the 500-yard freestyle final at the NCAA Men's Swimming and Diving Championships on Thursday night. Runberg's performance in the meet, held at the University of Texas in Austin, Texas, also earned him a spot as a first-team All-American. He completed the final in 4:22.69.

Junior Micah Copeland, swimming in the 500 free consolation final, garnered a 14th-place finish in 4:24.51, good for honorable mention All-America honors.

The Tar Heel contingent also sent two

relay teams to the consolation finals of their respective events Thursday.

The relay consolation finals ended too late to be included in this edition of The Daily Tar Heel. Full results will be printed in Monday's paper.

In the qualifying heats of the 500 free, Runberg posted a time of 4:20.29 to reach the championships. Copeland finished 10th in the 500 free in a career-best 4:22.07. Freshman Mike Chorba finished 29th in 4:27.15.

But the biggest story of the meet for the Tar Heels has been freshman Tucker Shade. Despite being ill with the intestinal flu,

Shade helped place two relay teams in the consolation finals.

The 200-yard freestyle team of freshman Ted Brisson, junior Matt Branum, Shade and sophomore Abele finished in 1:21.65 for 16th place. The 400 medley team of Runberg, sophomore Scott Troy, Shade and Abele finished 12th in 3:16.90. Shade was expected to swim with that relay team Thursday night.

In the 200-yard individual medley, sophomore Eric Fehr finished 24th with a career-best time of 1:49.55.

Freshman Tom Schmelzer finished 32nd in 1:50.61.

WEEKEND SPORTS SCHEDULE	
<b>Today</b>	<b>Women's Tennis vs. Florida State,</b> Cone-Kenfield Tennis Center, 11 a.m.
<b>Baseball</b> at Wake Forest, Winston-Salem, 3 p.m.	<b>Men's and Women's Track</b> in Raleigh Relays, Raleigh, 1 p.m.
<b>Softball</b> in Buzz Classic, Atlanta, TBA	<b>Men's and Women's Track</b> in Florida Relays, Gainesville, Fla., 1 p.m.
<b>Men's and Women's Track</b> in Raleigh Relays, Raleigh, 1 p.m.	<b>Men's Golf</b> at Carpet Capital Collegiate, Dalton, Ga., TBA
<b>Men's and Women's Track</b> in Florida Relays, Gainesville, Fla., 1 p.m.	
<b>Men's Golf</b> at Carpet Capital Collegiate, Dalton, Ga., TBA	
	<b>Sunday</b>
<b>Baseball</b> at Wake Forest, Winston-Salem, 2 p.m.	<b>Baseball</b> at Wake Forest, Winston-Salem, 2 p.m.
<b>Men's Lacrosse</b> at Johns Hopkins, Baltimore, Md., 2 p.m.	<b>Softball</b> in Buzz Classic, Atlanta, TBA
<b>Women's Lacrosse vs. Virginia Tech,</b> Fetzer Field, 2 p.m.	<b>Men's Tennis</b> at Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., 1 p.m.
<b>Softball</b> in Buzz Classic, Atlanta, TBA	<b>Women's Tennis vs. Georgia Tech,</b> Cone-Kenfield Tennis Center, 1 p.m.
<b>Men's Tennis</b> at Maryland, College Park, Md., 1 p.m.	<b>Men's Golf</b> at Carpet Capital Collegiate, Dalton, Ga., TBA
	<b>Women's Golf</b> at Duke Invitational, Durham, TBA

## Graf Extends Win Streak, Advances to Lipton Finals

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KEY BISCAIYNE, Fla. — Steffi Graf, treasuring tennis as never before, closed within one victory of another trophy Thursday.

The top-seeded Graf extended her winning streak to 18 consecutive matches by beating No. 8 Lindsay Davenport 6-4, 6-4 in the semifinals of the Lipton Championships. Her opponent in Saturday's final will be the winner of Thursday night's match between No. 6 Chanda Rubin and unseeded Karina Habsudova.

No. 2 seed Pete Sampras advanced to the men's semifinals by beating unseeded Floridian Vince Spadea 6-3, 6-4.

Graf, a four-time Lipton champion, is undefeated since October despite injuries and personal problems.

"If you have to deal with these things, you realize what a great life you have on the tour," she said earlier this week. "You realize how great it is just to focus on tennis, to do something that you really love. That's something that I've not treasured as much as I do now."

The 26-year-old Graf plays—and wins—despite chronic back spasms and other ailments caused by the pounding her body has taken during 14 years on the WTA Tour. She returned this month from foot surgery in December.



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# Urvashi Vaid

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