

76ers' Iverson Agrees To Change Rap Lyrics

The Associated Press

NEW YORK - Allen Iverson will take steps to eliminate offensive lyrics from the final version of his rap album, NBA commissioner David Stern said Thursday after meeting with Iverson at league headquarters.

Stern did not fine or suspend Iverson but issued a statement critical of the Philadelphia guard, whose rap recording contains violent references and derogatory terms about gays, women and blacks.

"It was a good meeting. I'm glad we had it. I'm glad he called me in," Iverson said. "It's important for me to be a professional about the whole thing. I've got to play a season. My rap album is over. At this point, the only thing you can do is handle it like a man."

By agreeing to eliminate some of the lyrics, Iverson made a departure from his earlier stance. After a meeting with civil rights groups earlier this week, Iverson said he would not change any lyrics.

Stern released a statement.

"The lyrics that have been attributed to

Allen Iverson's soon to be released rap CD are coarse, offensive and anti-social. However, I have come to understand, unfortunately, that certain rap artists regularly spew such lyrics to a wide audience at great profit to some of America's most successful entertainment companies.

"Notwithstanding the music's wide popularity, Allen, by even recording his lyrics, has done a disservice to himself, the Philadelphia 76ers, his teammates and perhaps all NBA players. However I do not believe that the NBA should be in the business of regulating artistic expression, no matter how repugnant," Stern said.

Stern's statement said Iverson had made a commitment to eliminate the offensive lyrics.

"If he doesn't follow through on that commitment, then he, along with the 76ers and the NBA, will merit whatever criticism may be leveled at us," Stern said.

The album is due out in February; an edited version of one rap, "40 Bars," was released to radio stations this week. The song is peppered with violent imagery and references to women, blacks and gays.

UNC, 'Pack Set for Offensive Battle

N.C. State comes into the game averaging 427.4 yards of total offense and 35.4 points per game this year.

Game and time: N.C. State at North Carolina. Kickoff is at 3:30 p.m. **Site:** Kenan Stadium.

TV/radio: The game will be televised regionally by ABC. The Tar Heel Sports Network will provide live radio coverage; its flagship station is WCHL 1360-AM.

Records: N.C. State is 4-1, 1-1 in the ACC. North Carolina is 3-2, 1-2.

Series: UNC leads 59-24-6.

Personnel update: N.C. State - No injuries reported.

UNC - LB Merceda Perry (right ankle) is out for the season. WR Kory Bailey (right hamstring) and CB Anthony Anderson (left shoulder) are doubtful. WR Danny Davis (left hamstring) and RB Rufus Brown (right shoulder) are questionable.

The key matchup: Much is being made of the battle between Mike O'Cain and his former players on the N.C. State defense, but that matchup won't decide this game.

The Wolfpack defense, as has been the case in recent years, is not the team's strength. Throwing out N.C. State's 41-0 shutout victory against Southern Methodist, the 'Pack is yielding 31.5 points per game. The Tar Heels will be good for about that many even if they don't have an outstanding game.

With that said, the real question is whether UNC can contain the Wolfpack's high-powered offense. The Tar Heels earned comparisons to dominant UNC defensive squads of 1996 and '97 after they shut down Tulsa and Wake Forest to open the season, but they have been anything but dominant since then.

Florida State dropped 63 points on them, and Georgia Tech drove the ball more than 60 yards for four of its six touchdowns two weeks ago.

"I will be shocked if this game is a 10-9 ballgame," UNC coach Carl Torbush said. "They have the ability to make big plays, and I think we have the ability to make some big plays."

The Lowdown on Saturday's Game



N.C. State Wolfpack
at North Carolina Tar Heels



(4-1, 1-1 in the ACC)

Kenan Stadium, 3:30 p.m.

(3-2, 1-2 in the ACC)

Head to Head

N.C. State's Rush vs. UNC's Front Seven:

N.C. State only runs to let its receivers catch their breath. The Tar Heels have struggled against the run recently but still rank 12th in the NCAA, allowing 87.0 ypg. **Edge: UNC.**



N.C. State's Pass vs. UNC's Secondary:

Coordinator Norm Chow is an offensive wizard, and QB Philip Rivers (340.2 ypg passing leads NCAA) is his prized pupil. UNC has no answer for WR Koren Robinson. **Edge: NCSU.**



UNC's Rush vs. N.C. State's Front Seven:

Frosh TB Brandon Russell is coming on, and André Williams is a good change of pace. The 'Pack gives up 186.2 ypg rushing and has surrendered 10 rushing TDs. **Edge: UNC.**



UNC's Pass vs. N.C. State's Secondary:

QB Ronald Curry has sparked since moving to the shotgun on a regular basis, and WRs Bosley Allen, Sam Aiken and Jamal Jones can score from anywhere on the field. **Edge: UNC.**



Special Teams

The 'Pack comes after kicks (12 blocked punts and 4 blocked FGs since 1998) like few other teams. Everyone remembers what happened to UNC against Georgia Tech. **Edge: NCSU.**



The Bottom Line — N.C. State 35, UNC 31

COMPILED BY T. NOLAN HAYES

"It's going to be an interesting game because both defenses are going to have to step up to meet the challenge."

The challenge N.C. State presents is formidable. The Wolfpack relies heavily on 18-year-old freshman quarterback Philip Rivers, who leads the country in passing at 340.2 yards per game.

Rivers gets help from The K-Rob and Ray-Rob Show, starring Koren and Ray Robinson (no relation).

Koren Robinson, the nation's No. 2 receiver at 120.2 yards per game, has recorded 100 yards receiving in a school-record six contests. The last time

he failed to clear the century mark was against UNC last year.

Rivers and Robinson hooked up for three scores, including the game-winner, against Georgia Tech and combined for a 63-yard bomb against Clemson last week.

"(Rivers) gets me the ball, and you can't dislike a quarterback who gets you the ball," Robinson said. "He knows where I'm going to be on certain plays, and he knows what I'm going to do in certain situations. We've got a good chemistry."

The Tar Heels cannot afford to play Robinson man-to-man - he is simply too big and too fast. Plus, Eric Leak, N.C. State's second receiver, drops as many passes as he catches. The smart move for the Tar Heels is to double-team Robinson with a safety and make

Leak and No. 3 wideout Bryan Peterson beat them.

The N.C. State ground game is much less impressive than its passing attack, but that's no fault of Ray Robinson. Robinson gets fewer carries in Norm Chow's offense than he got in the past, but he is still a dangerous player.

Robinson averages 61.4 yards per game on the ground - or 81.7 percent of his team's total rushing yards.

"They throw it a great deal, but they can run it," Torbush said. "I think if you overlook the running game, you're getting ready to get in trouble. Robinson can turn a short gain into a big gain."

UNC, meanwhile, has been shaky against the run recently. The Tar Heels led the nation in rushing defense after two games (8.5 ypg) but have allowed 139.3 ypg in their last three games.

Final analysis/prediction: In light of all the attention Mike O'Cain has been getting, UNC's coaches have said all week that this game is about the players, not the coaches.

But the coaches could play a key role in the outcome. The Tar Heels take pride in being able to play bump-and-run coverage all over the field, but they can't succeed with that strategy in large doses against N.C. State. Torbush and defensive coordinator Ken Browning need to realize this and give safety help to cornerbacks Errol Hood and Michael Waddell.

The Wolfpack is not patient enough to take lots of time and run the ball down the field with Ray Robinson, so minimizing big plays is important for the Tar Heels.

"State's a great team - they're playing with a lot of confidence right now," Hood said. "The way to counteract that is to come out and play. We realize they are going to make big plays, but you have to get up the next play and play the next play. You can't get down on yourself, or it's over."

Torbush said the Tar Heels would mix up their defenses against Rivers to try to keep him off balance, but that's easier said than done because Rivers is so poised. In the end, the Tar Heels will probably resort to blitzing their linebackers and relying on their defensive backs to make plays on balls in the air.

That strategy has not worked this season, as evidenced by UNC's two interceptions (second worst in the ACC).

It won't work Saturday either.
N.C. State 35, UNC 31
- Compiled by T. Nolan Hayes

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