

# They've still got UNC basketball jones

**O**K, Tar Heel fans. Exhale. Let out that sigh of relief you've been holding in since North Carolina's season ended in San Antonio.

Ty Lawson, Wayne Ellington and Danny Green made you sweat for as long as possible — the press release came just 18 minutes before the 5 p.m. deadline — but they withdrew their names from the NBA Draft and will be Carolina-blue-clad for at least one more year.

Now, finally, you can relax. Well, not so fast.

The suspense might be finished, but now the real drama begins.

Late Night with Roy might not be for another four months and tip-off even longer, but the road to the 2009 Final Four officially began June 16 when the trio announced their plans to return to Chapel Hill.

At that moment, UNC became the clear-cut favorite to win the 2009 national championship. There won't be much cause for



**MIKE EHRLICH**  
THAT JUST HAPPENED

debate as to which team will sit atop the preseason rankings.

It is a situation that mirrors Florida's two years ago. After the Gators won it all in 2006, they returned all five starters to defend the title. They were the odds-on favorites from the moment Taurean Green, Joakim Noah, Al Horford and Corey Brewer announced plans to stay in school.

The Gators took on the status of preseason No. 1, absorbed everyone's best shot and prevailed.

Now it's North Carolina's turn. The quartet of National Player of the Year Tyler Hansbrough, who

didn't even test the NBA waters, Lawson, Ellington and Green is comparable to the Florida foursome. Add in Deon Thompson, Marcus Ginyard and a couple of five-star recruits, and you've got a scary assemblage of talent.

But, no team will have a bigger bulls-eye on its back than UNC.

On paper, North Carolina looks tailor-made for a title run. An emotional leader. A point guard that pushes the pace and takes care of the ball. Lights-out shooters on the perimeter. A lock-down defender. A lineup that goes eight or nine deep. And they've been there before.

But the better a team looks at the year's outset, the higher the expectations are and the more everybody else wants to knock that team off. This is why only two teams this decade were ranked preseason No. 1 and went on to win it all.

When both Lawson and Ellington announced their plans to return, they concluded with their

hopes not to get back to the tournament, not to make a return trip to the Final Four but to go all the way.

"I am looking forward to working toward our goal of winning a national championship," Ellington said.

Lawson echoed the sentiments: "I look forward to playing next season and trying to win a national championship."

And it's not just on their minds. The Andy Katzes, Pat Forde and Luke Winns of the world already have their eyes on Chapel Hill, and the spotlight might not go away until nets are cut down in Detroit.

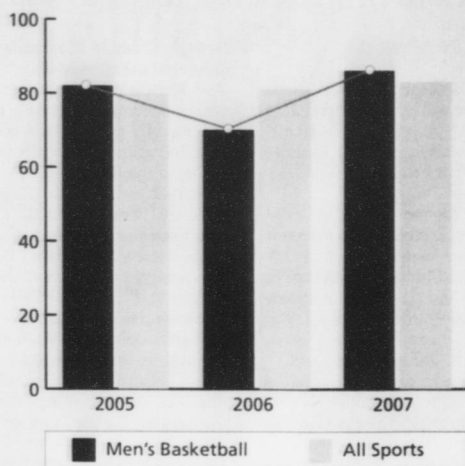
There are lots of ways for a basketball team to have a successful season, but this year, anything short of a national title might be considered a bust for these Tar Heels.

So buckle up, UNC fans. You can relax in April.

Contact Mike Ehrlich at [emichae@email.unc.edu](mailto:emichae@email.unc.edu).

## Student Athlete Graduation Success Rate

As a whole, UNC's athletic program recently has seen a steady increase in the percentage of graduating student athletes. But men's basketball numbers have fluctuated in the past few years, due in some part to early exits to the NBA. The return of these three players could lead to another increase for the next report.



SOURCE: [HTTP://WWW2.NCAA.ORG/PORTAL/ACADEMICS\\_AND\\_ATHLETES](http://www2.ncaa.org/portal/academics_and_athletes) DTH/BLISS PIERCE

# Stem cells may help bone healing

BY M.K. AYERS  
STAFF WRITER

A recent medical breakthrough at UNC may help thousands every year whose broken bones do not heal.

Researchers who transplanted adult mouse stem cells into mice with fractured bones showed that the cells could help heal the fractures.

Anna Spagnoli, associate professor of pediatrics and biomedical engineering at UNC and senior author of the study, said it was meant to determine whether adult stem cells could be used to improve the healing tissue at a fractured site and whether the cells went directly to the injury once transplanted.

She said that as a pediatrician, she has worked with children with brittle bone disease and became interested in researching treatments for fracture healing.

Spagnoli said fracture healing is a major medical problem in the United States. The condition is often found in women with osteoporosis. It can cause intense pain and immobilization, and can require constant medical supervision and assistance.

"Most of the time we really don't know why they don't heal," Spagnoli said. "We think the most important reason why these patients don't heal is because they lack stem cells."

Current treatments for fracture healing include using bone grafts or

prosthetic materials to aid in healing a fracture. But bone grafts are painful and difficult, especially in children whose bones are not yet fully grown, and prosthetic materials do not integrate with bones and can wear out over time or become toxic.

After finding that stem cells helped the mice's bones heal, Spagnoli said the researchers wanted to determine whether they were attracted directly to the injury, and what made them turn into bone and cartilage once they arrived.

"We need to man the cells," Spagnoli said. "Steer the cells to go to the fractured site and improve the healing."

In order to track the stem cells, researchers used luciferase — the same substance that causes fireflies to glow — to follow the cells in the mice's bodies. By tracking them, the scientists discovered that the molecule CXCR4 directed the stem cells toward the fracture.

After studying the stem cells more closely, they found that IGF-1, an insulin-like growth factor, caused the cells to turn into bone and cartilage at the break.

Spagnoli said she hopes the study, which started about three years ago, will lead to clinical trials to prove that the procedure also can work in humans.

Spagnoli plans to continue to study IGF-1 and its functions. "It

## Using stem cells to heal fractures

This research could be used to help the 600,000 people in the U.S. every year who have fractures that don't heal.

- > stem cells are extracted from bone marrow in adult mice
- > luciferase (substance that makes fireflies glow) is inserted into cells
- > cells are transplanted into mice with fractures
- > mice are placed in a dark box, and after three days, show that the stem cells did go to fractured sites
- > healing tissue in mice that received the cells becomes three times stronger and twice as large as tissues of mice that didn't receive them

makes more bone and cartilage but how does it do that? We don't know," she said.

But for now, she and the first author of the study, Dr. Froilan Granero-Molto, plan to enjoy a bottle of Spanish wine they have been saving for the end of the study.

Contact the University Editor at [udesk@unc.edu](mailto:udesk@unc.edu).

# Town leaders under lockdown

## Get 'arrested' to fund muscular dystrophy

BY BRITTANY JACKSON  
STAFF WRITER

Making arrests and raising bail was the theme Wednesday at the Franklin Hotel for some of Chapel Hill's leaders and business owners, who were "arrested" and brought to be "locked up" until they could meet their set bails.

The jailbirds took part in the annual "lock-up," a fundraiser for the Muscular Dystrophy Association's local district.

"This is one of our biggest fundraisers," said Karissa Binkley, district director of the Muscular Dystrophy Association for Eastern Carolina.

"People get pretty competitive and like to raise money, especially when they know what the money's going toward."

"They get to meet our kids and families, which allows them to put a face with the disease."

About 200 business representatives and leaders from the area participated in the event, with several of them being long-term participants.

Delos O'Daniel, who has been a

jailbird each year since 1983, said he contributes his time year after year because he believes in the cause.

"The first time I participated I went home feeling good about myself," O'Daniel said. "I know the money is going where it's needed."

He put work into raising money before even arriving at the lock-up by mailing out 110 requests for support and making phone calls.

"Anyone who sees those kids in wheelchairs, it's heartbreaking," O'Daniel said. "The least we can do is give some of our time. It just takes a little time."

Each participant volunteered to be arrested and was brought to the hotel to raise his share of the bail by making phone calls and getting pledges. The money will go to the MDA clinics at UNC, Duke University and a summer camp in Stokesdale, and also will help people get wheelchairs and braces.

"Muscular dystrophy affects all groups of people — every age group, both genders, and it stands any ethnicity," Binkley said. "Although we're finding ways to

extend peoples' lives and comfort, there's still no cure."

Binkley said the district to which Chapel Hill belongs provides services for 17 counties and 1,500 families at no cost to the patients, and it relies heavily on this fundraiser each year. The goal for this year was \$100,000.

Melissa Crane, director of sales and marketing at Franklin Hotel, said she was excited to be hosting the event.

"It's a very important charitable cause, so to have the opportunity to hold it here was an honor," Crane said. "It's a great way for people to have the downtown experience while working toward the cause."

Binkley said the exposure the event brings to MD is important in raising money locally.

"It's a great way to raise money, because it's fun for people so they come back year after year. It also gives muscular dystrophy a more local face," she said.

"It shows people that we're not a nebulous nonprofit organization that just exists — we're important in the community."

Contact the City Editor at [citydesk@unc.edu](mailto:citydesk@unc.edu)

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If interested, please contact: **Tiffany V. Hambricht, RDH**  
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you will be contacted within 24 hours.