

# MARCH MADNESS



## ROAD TO THE FINAL FOUR

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Staff graphic  
by Suzanne Schubert

# UNC:

## Which way to San Antonio?

Even if things go the Tar Heels' way, the trip from Raleigh to San Antonio should be filled with some interesting twists and unexpected turns. Staff writer Dan Wiederer previews the road ahead — and potential potholes — for UNC.

## FIRST STOP

### RBC Center, Raleigh

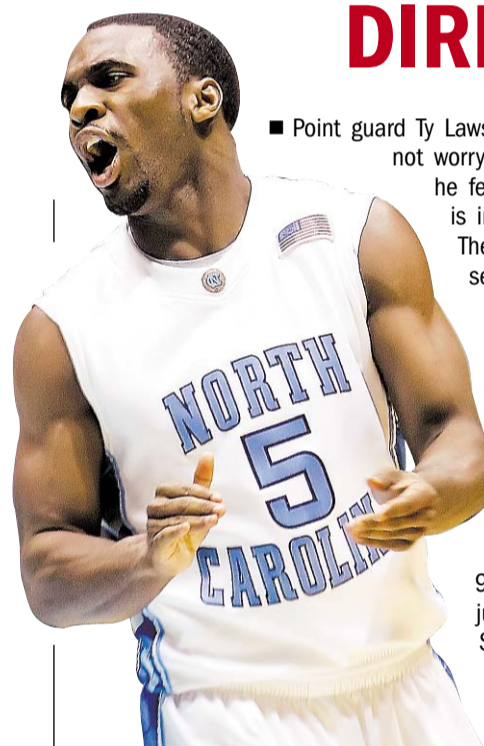
North Carolina is 21-1 in NCAA tournament games played inside state lines. But that one loss came in Raleigh on Black Sunday (March 11, 1979) when the Tar Heels fell, 72-71, to Penn at Reynolds Coliseum. Since Roy Williams returned to Chapel Hill in 2003, Carolina is 4-1 at the RBC Center, including this season's 84-70 pasting of N.C. State on Feb. 20.

## SECOND STOP

### Bobcats Arena, Charlotte

After winning the ACC tournament, Carolina is 6-0 in the three-year-old arena. The Tar Heels also have never lost an NCAA tournament game in the Queen City. Their most recent stop in Charlotte came in 2005 when they hammered Oakland, 96-68, in the first round, then beat Iowa State, 92-65, two days later on the way to the national title.

## DIRECTIONS

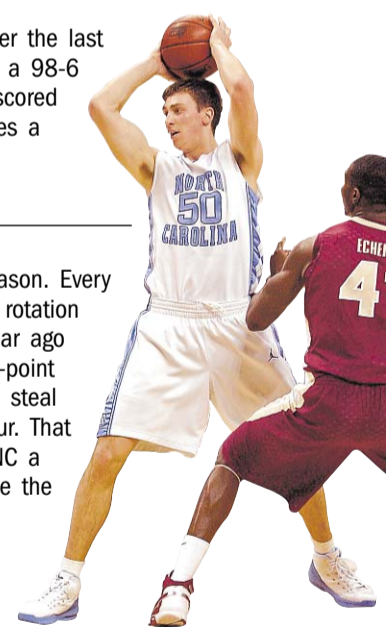


- Point guard Ty Lawson (left) needs to let loose and not worry about every tinge of discomfort he feels in his left ankle. When Lawson is in attack mode, UNC is dominant. The Tar Heels are 28-3 the last two seasons in games in which Lawson has had at least 10 points and five assists.

- Feed Tyler Hansbrough (below) and get out of the way. The likely National Player of the Year has been relentless in UNC's 11-game winning streak, averaging 24.8 points and 9.8 rebounds. The game-winning jumper to beat Virginia Tech on Saturday and the unbridled celebration that followed typified his hustle and intensity.

- Continue to push the pace. Over the last four years, Carolina has compiled a 98-6 record in games in which it has scored more than 80 points. That includes a perfect 26-0 mark this season.

- Remember the sting of last season. Every player in the Tar Heels' nine-man rotation was in East Rutherford, N.J., a year ago when Georgetown overcame a 10-point deficit with six minutes to play to steal Carolina's tickets for the Final Four. That painful experience should give UNC a competitive edge in trying to close the deal this time.



Roy Williams and UNC celebrate their NCAA title in 2005

## IN THE TRUNK

- Of the 64 teams in the bracket, UNC boasts the No. 1 scoring offense (88.7 ppg) and rebounding margin (plus-11.4). The Tar Heels also rank third over tournament and in scoring margin (plus-16.0), fourth in free-throw percentage (.754) and sixth in field-goal percentage (.482).

- Marcus Ginyard (left) has scored in double figures in four of the last five games and is shooting 54.7 percent during Carolina's 11-game winning streak.

- In 20 years as a head coach, Roy Williams (right) has led six teams to conference tournament championships. The previous five squads have a combined 8-5 record in NCAA tournament play, and none made it to the Final Four.

- If the Tar Heels survive this weekend, Williams will tie John Wooden for third in all-time NCAA tournament wins with 47, behind only Dean Smith (65) and Mike Krzyzewski (68).

With two wins in Raleigh, the Tar Heels would tie the school record for victories with 34, a mark held by the 1992-93 and 1997-98 teams.



## POTENTIAL POTHOLES

- An icy Wayne Ellington shooting night could be Carolina's dead end. Ellington was super at the ACC tournament, totaling 58 points in three games. But in UNC's nine losses the last two seasons, the shooting guard has averaged just 8.2 points on 31.3 percent shooting. His 4-for-16 3-point shooting in last year's NCAA tournament should be a concern.



- A second-round game with Indiana could prove harder than the top-seeded Tar Heels deserved. Before the Kelvin Sampson mess, the Hoosiers were ranked as high as No. 7 in the AP poll. They have the Big Ten's leading scorer in electric freshman Eric Gordon (21.3 ppg).

- Don't think the Sweet 16 and Elite Eight will be easy. Washington State, the East Regional's No. 4 seed, plays a slow style that could fluster the Tar Heels. The Cougars allowed an average of just 57.1 points per game. Tennessee won't be intimidated by the pro-Tar Heel crowd in Charlotte, either. The Volunteers have road wins this season at Xavier, Gonzaga and Memphis.

