

Berry and 'the ride in the white truck'

Sophomore Joel Berry shaped by time spent with his dad

By Carlos Collazo
Senior Writer

Joel Berry is riding in the white truck with his father, Joel Berry Sr.

They are headed to his high school, Lake Highland Preparatory in Orlando, Fla. The heater isn't running, mostly because it isn't necessary down in Florida, but also because it doesn't work. The radio isn't on either, but that works just fine.

Berry Sr. doesn't want it on, though, because on these 30-minute drives to and from Lake Highland, he wants to talk to his son — who's one of the most talented basketball players in the area. He wants to be able to make an impact on him.

But not in how many points he should be trying to score as a freshman. Not in what colleges he should be trying to get in or what crossover dribbles are the best to break down the defender in front of him or the different ways to use his speed and strength to score over bigger players. None of that.

So, why?
"So we could talk about life," Berry Sr. says, "And (so I could) always remind him that life is bigger than basketball. So we just talked about a lot, from his ninth-



DTH/KATIE WILLIAMS

Sophomore guard Joel Berry (2) walks down the court during North Carolina's loss 79-74 to Virginia in February.

grade year all the way to his senior year.

"And we called it the ride in the white truck."

'Something special'

Before those rides in the white truck, though, when Berry Sr. explained to his son all the things

that were more important than basketball, came — well — basketball.

Berry Sr. started an inner-city basketball league with around 600 kids in the Orlando area when his eldest children, daughters Kourtne and Kasie, were young. Berry was younger still, just 6 years old.

While Berry Sr. was coaching an

all-girls team, Berry was following his father around as his "little ball boy." But that wasn't going to be enough for the 6-year-old child.

"He kept saying, 'Let me play, let me play, let me play,' and we were like, 'No, you're too small,'" Berry Sr. remembers saying.

But one Saturday not long after, Berry Sr. and his wife, Kathie,

relented.

"We decided to just pad him up," Berry Sr. said. "My wife put (on) the knee pads, elbow pads, and we let him play. And it just took off from there."

"He got in the game — he was 6 years old playing against the kids that were like 8- and 9-year-olds, and he was handling his own on the court."

"And we were like, 'Wow, this is something special.'"

'Iron sharpens iron'

"One of the first times I remember meeting Joel," says Dustin Bowlin, who was Berry's assistant basketball coach at Lake Highland, "We were actually doing a little game we call Seven Up."

This was Berry's first year at Lake Highland, before the coaches really knew who he was. They had heard of him, of course. He was well known in the area for his basketball skill. So much so that head coach Jason Vallery got a call from Jacksonville University.

"(Jacksonville University's) head coach said, 'Well, your school and your program has just been blessed.' And we got excited about that," Vallery said. "And we got to see what that meant."

Bowlin found out something of what that meant during that game of Seven Up.

"We got into this little shooting competition, and I'm kind of being a coach to him, like, 'I got you here, I got you here!' I mean, he absolutely obliterated me," Bowlin said, laughing. "And he did it so respectfully. I think the final score was like 42-21, but I felt with the way he

SEE JOEL BERRY, PAGE 7

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What to know of UNC's potential foes

The ACC Tournament is consistently one of the top conference tournaments in the country. And this year's edition will likely be no different.

As the No. 1 seed, North Carolina enters the tournament as one of the favorites to win it. But the Tar Heels aren't the only team that could bring home the hardware.

No. 2 seed Virginia and No. 3 seed Miami finished one game behind UNC in the ACC standings and feature two of the conference's top players in Cavalier guard Malcolm Brogdon and Hurricane

guard Sheldon McClellan.

Louisville, which finished fourth in the ACC, won't play in the tournament after imposing a one-year post-season ban amid an ongoing NCAA investigation into an alleged recruiting scandal at the university. But the competition will still be stiff.

Here's a look at the 10 teams still competing in the ACC Tournament as of 5 p.m. on Wednesday.

—Compiled by C Jackson Cowart, Pat James and Logan Ulrich

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North Carolina (25-6, 14-4 ACC)

North Carolina enters the ACC Tournament on a high note after holding off Duke in the regular season finale to bring a conference title to Chapel Hill for the first time in four years.

After experiencing their share of ups and downs during the season, the Tar Heels appear to have turned the corner. Senior forward Brice Johnson is playing as well as any other big man in the country, and forwards Justin Jackson and Kennedy Meeks finished the season strong.

But the shooting woes of Marcus Paige continue to baffle the Tar Heels. After earning preseason conference honors, Paige shot 27.9 percent from 3-point range during ACC play — far from a 41.5 percent mark in 2015. If UNC hopes to win its first ACC Tournament since 2008, the team will look for its senior leader to return to prior form.



Virginia (24-6, 13-5 ACC)

Led by ACC Player of the Year Malcolm Brogdon, Virginia stormed to the second-best record in the ACC, tying with Miami. Among the Cavaliers' 13 ACC wins is a 79-74 win over UNC on Feb. 27. Coach Tony Bennett's pack line defense stifled the Tar Heels in Charlottesville, Va., where UVA. hasn't dropped a game all season.

Virginia has been a different team away from home, though. The Cavaliers hold a 5-6 record on the road this season, including losses at George Washington, Georgia Tech and Florida State.

Playing at a neutral site in Washington, D.C., isn't exactly a road game, but UVA. hopes its second-ranked scoring defense can propel the Cavaliers to their third ACC title in program history and second in three seasons.



Miami (24-6, 13-5 ACC)

For most of the season, Miami has looked like one of the best teams in the country. Redshirt seniors Sheldon McClellan and Angel Rodriguez form a dynamic scoring tandem in the backcourt, while senior center Tonye Jekiri is one of the best defenders in the country and anchors the Hurricanes' top-50 scoring defense.

But poor showings against middling opponents plagued Miami throughout the season. Despite holding serve with North Carolina and Virginia for much of the season, Miami tied for second in the ACC after blowout road defeats at Clemson, N.C. State and Virginia Tech — not to mention a 96-71 shellacking in Chapel Hill on Feb. 20.

Miami could win the tournament or lose its first game. Neither would be a shock.



Notre Dame (20-10, 11-7 ACC)

Despite losing three of its final five conference games, Notre Dame still secured the No. 4 seed and a coveted double-bye — courtesy of a tiebreaking win over Duke and a postseason ban for Louisville.

Coach Mike Brey and the Fighting Irish are no strangers to this stage, as third-seeded Notre Dame topped North Carolina in the final to win the tournament a season ago.

Senior Zach Auguste and junior Demetrius Jackson have carried the load for the Fighting Irish this season, with Jackson — second in the conference with 5.0 assists per game — earning a spot on the All-ACC second team.

But despite boasting two of the ACC's top-20 scorers, Notre Dame's 133rd-ranked scoring defense will likely be challenged by the potent offenses of its conference foes.



Duke (23-9, 11-7 ACC)

After defeating N.C. State 92-89 in Wednesday's second round, Duke advanced to the ACC Tournament quarterfinals for a rematch with fourth-seeded Notre Dame.

The Blue Devils' plan is simple: shoot 3-pointers and get to the free-throw line. Behind the dynamic play of sophomore guard Grayson Allen and first-year forward Brandon Ingram — two All-ACC honorees — Duke produced the second-best scoring offense in the conference this season despite primarily using a six-man rotation.

But Duke's thin roster could prove to be its downfall. The Blue Devils flirted with foul trouble in its 76-72 loss to North Carolina on Mar. 5. And if the Blue Devils are to claim a record 20th ACC Tournament championship, Allen and Ingram will have to lead the charge.



Pittsburgh (21-10, 9-9 ACC)

After defeating Syracuse 72-71 in the second round of the ACC Tournament on Wednesday, eighth-seeded Pittsburgh will face North Carolina for the second time this season in the quarterfinals.

After starting 4-0 in ACC play, the Panthers lost six of their next nine conference games, culminating in 85-64 beatdown in Chapel Hill for Pittsburgh's worst loss of the season.

Led by junior forward Michael Young — who earned All-ACC third-team honors in his third year starting — the Panthers spent the early part of the season in the top-25 and boast wins over Duke and Notre Dame on its resume. But after dropping three of its final four games in the regular season, Pittsburgh will likely rely to its do-it-all forward to try to topple the top-seeded North Carolina.



Virginia Tech (18-13, 10-8 ACC)

After Virginia Tech soared through the start of ACC play with a 4-1 record — including a win over then-No. 4 Virginia — the Hokies lost seven of their next eight games, including a crushing 75-70 home loss to North Carolina on Jan 24.

But like a phoenix from the ashes, Virginia Tech finished the year strong. The Hokies claimed their final five ACC games, including a blowout win over Miami to end the regular season and earn the No. 6 seed in the ACC Tournament.

Led by redshirt junior forward Zach LeDay, an All-ACC honorable mention, Virginia Tech will look to prove its strong play against top competition was more than a fluke.

The Hokies played No. 11 Florida State on Wednesday night for a chance to play Miami in today's quarterfinals.



Clemson (17-13, 10-8 ACC)

Despite pulling out big home wins over Louisville, Duke and Miami, Clemson struggled on the road during ACC play, going 3-6 and dropping four games by a combined 15 points.

One of the Tigers' road conference losses came in their ACC opener against North Carolina on Dec. 30, when the Tar Heels improved their all-time home record against Clemson to 58-0.

One of the lone bright spots for the Tigers in the loss to UNC was redshirt junior forward Jaron Blossomgame — who scored a team-best 15 points against the Tar Heels and earned All-ACC first-team honors after finishing third in the conference with 18.6 points per game.

The Tigers faced No. 10 seed Georgia Tech on Wednesday night for a spot in today's quarterfinals.



Georgia Tech (18-13, 8-10 ACC)

After losing its conference opener 86-78 to North Carolina on Jan. 2, Georgia Tech struggled to gain any traction in ACC competition this year.

But behind inspired play from senior guard Marcus Georges-Hunt, an All-ACC third-team member, the rejuvenated Yellow Jackets claimed five of their final six games — including one-possession wins over Notre Dame and Clemson and a four-point victory against Pittsburgh in the regular season finale.

The Yellow Jackets once again faced seventh-seeded Clemson on Wednesday night, with the winner advancing to play second-seeded Virginia in today's quarterfinals.



Florida State (19-12, 8-10 ACC)

As the No. 11 seed, Florida State advanced to Wednesday's second round with an 88-66 victory over No. 14 seed Boston College.

The win over the Eagles marked the Seminoles' third in a row, as the team has gained momentum since dropping five consecutive games in February. Entering the ACC Tournament, the team scored quality wins over Notre Dame and Syracuse.

For much of the year, Florida State has relied on stellar first-years Dwayne Bacon and Malik Beasley — who averaged 15.7 and 15.6 points per game, respectively. But both players struggled in the first half of the Seminoles' 106-90 home loss to North Carolina on Jan. 4.

The Seminoles faced sixth-seeded Virginia Tech on Wednesday night for a spot in today's quarterfinals.



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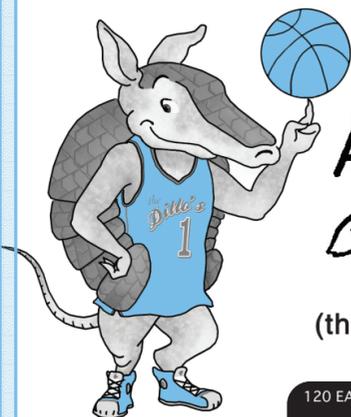
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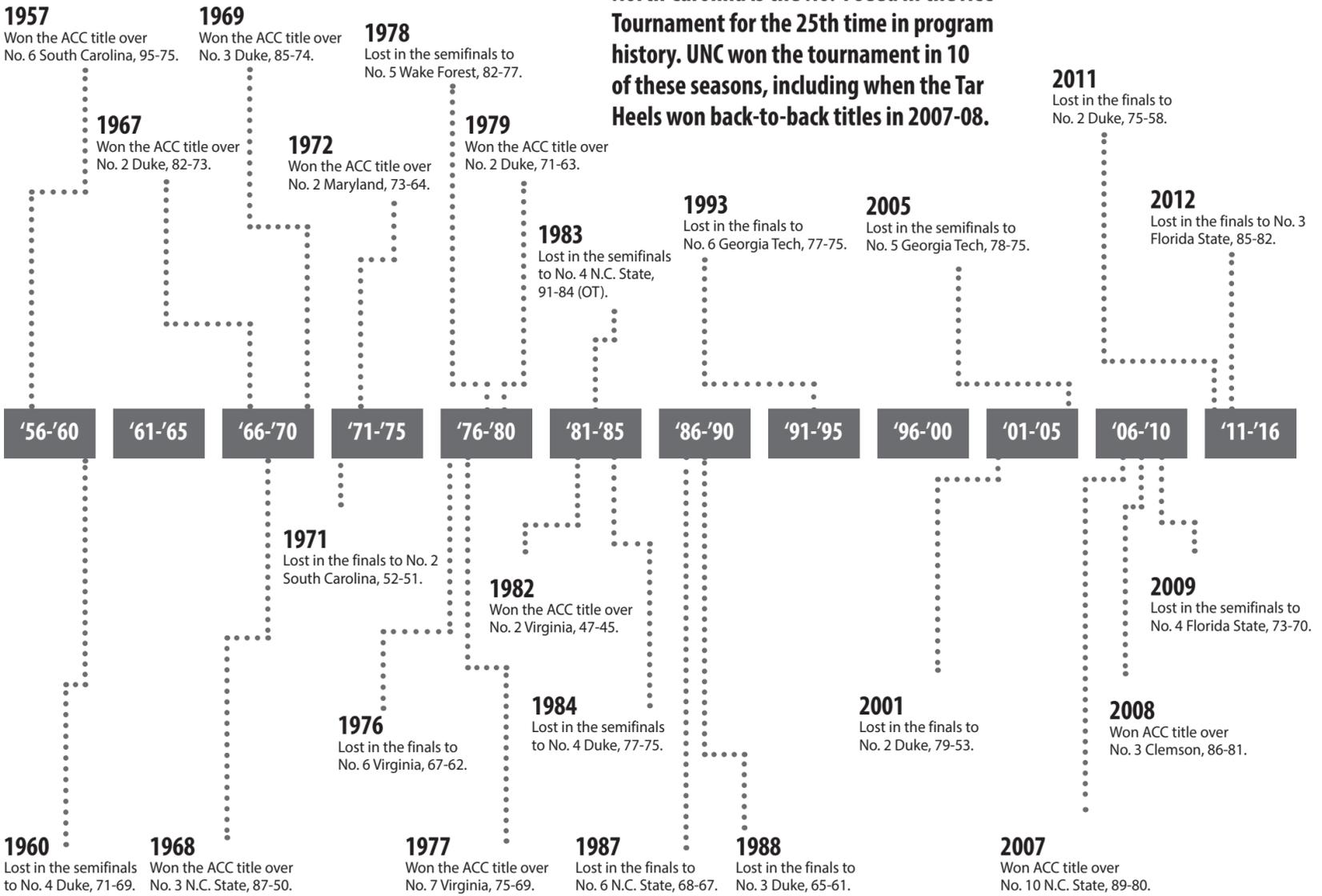
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North Carolina is the No. 1 seed in the ACC Tournament for the 25th time in program history. UNC won the tournament in 10 of these seasons, including when the Tar Heels won back-to-back titles in 2007-08.



TAR HEELS IN THE TOURNAMENT

The North Carolina men's basketball team enters the 63rd ACC Tournament seeking its 18th championship in program history. Here is how the Tar Heels have fared in previous tournaments:

- UNC has entered the ACC Tournament as the No. 1 seed more times than any school in the conference. The Tar Heels have claimed the top seed in 25 tournaments, while Duke has earned the honor 17 times.
- Since becoming the head coach at North Carolina prior to the 2003-04 season, Roy Williams is 12-4 in seven appearances as the No. 1 seed in the ACC Tournament. The Tar Heels have won two titles in those seven seasons and lost in the final round on two other occasions.
- North Carolina has won more games in the quarterfinals and semifinals, respectively, than any other program. UNC is 42-13 in the quarterfinals and 33-14 in the semifinals. The Tar Heels' first game in this year's ACC Tournament will be in the quarterfinals.
- UNC has reached the ACC Tournament championship game 33 times in the 62-year history of the tournament, more than any other school. The Tar Heels are 17-16 in the championship game, trailing only the Blue Devils' 19 title game victories.
- The last time the ACC Tournament was held in Washington, D.C., North Carolina won the NCAA championship. In 2005, the top-seeded Tar Heels fell in the second round to Georgia Tech before winning six straight games in the NCAA Tournament.

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The Daily Tar Heel staff predicts ACC Tournament champ

After picking the top ACC and national men's college basketball games each week this semester, The Daily Tar Heel pickers turn their attention to the postseason.

Fresh off his regular season championship, Assistant Sports Editor Logan Ulrich looks to continue his recent

success, while Assistant Sports Editor Jeremy Vernon hopes to expunge his status as the desk's cellar dweller.

Boston College might have a better chance of winning an ACC game than for that to happen.

Here's how everyone thinks the ACC Tournament

will shake out:

PAT JAMES, SPORTS EDITOR: Since 2002, the No. 1 and No. 2 seeds have met in the ACC Tournament championship game just one time. That was in 2011, when top-seeded North Carolina fell to second-seeded Duke. Before then, the

top two seeds squared off in the championship 21 times. With almost no disparity in college basketball this season, I doubt No. 1 seed UNC and No. 2 seed Virginia will meet in this year's championship, as many of my colleagues believe. Miami found success against UVa. a little over two

weeks ago, and I believe the third-seeded Hurricanes will storm past the Cavaliers to make it to the championship game. On the other side of the bracket, I see the Tar Heels topping Duke before claiming their 18th ACC Tournament title with a win over Miami.

BRENDAN MARKS, SENIOR WRITER: Virginia gets revenge on Miami in the semifinals to reach the championship game. On the other side, UNC squeaks past short-sided Duke for the second time this season. But UVa. ultimately takes home its second ACC Tournament title in three years by shutting down UNC's offense again.

CJACKSON COWART, ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR: In a battle of slumping heavyweights, Notre Dame knocks out Duke in the quarterfinals, but the Fighting Irish can't match blows with North Carolina in the semifinals. Meanwhile, Miami easily dispatches Virginia Tech to avenge a season-ending loss, but Virginia halts the Hurricanes to settle their season series. In the championship round, UNC and UVa. battle for the conference crown and a potential top seed in the NCAA Tournament. North Carolina forces the ball inside against the vaunted Virginia pack line defense, but the Cavaliers stand tall against Brice Johnson and the Tar Heels, as a big game from Malcolm Brogdon propels Virginia to its third ACC Tournament championship in program history.

LOGAN ULRICH, ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR: I think North Carolina can handle whichever team comes out of the Pittsburgh/Syracuse matchup, although I think they'd have an easier time with the Panthers. Then UNC beats Duke to win the season series and advance to the championship, where it would face Virginia. I think Miami has a legitimate shot to make it to the finals, but I think they could just as easily drop to Virginia Tech. So

I'll go with the consistency of the Cavaliers. Once in the championship, the Tar Heels prove they've finally turned the corner by avenging their earlier loss. Kennedy Meeks and Brice Johnson both turn in good games at the same time, while Paige turns back the clock 365 days to save a Cinderella ending to his senior season.

JEREMY VERNON, ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR: Marcus Paige has shot just 27.9 percent from 3-point range in conference play, but all that will change when the Tar Heels head to Washington, D.C. I believe the senior guard will shoot over 50 percent from long range over the course of the ACC Tournament, carrying UNC past the Duke Blue Devils in the semifinals and into the final against Virginia. In the championship game, Paige scores 22 points to help North Carolina cut down the nets.

PAIGE LADISIC, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: In my completely uneducated opinion, I like to think this year's ACC Tournament will go better than last year's (when I watched UNC lose to Notre Dame in the championship from a hospital bed.) It's not easy, but I think UNC will move past its poor shooting performance in the second half of Saturday's Duke game to defeat Notre Dame in the semifinals and take on Virginia in the ACC championship game. And judging by my flawless mascot cuteness scale, I predict UNC will win out the ACC Tournament this year. A girl can dream.

CARLOS COLLAZO, SENIOR WRITER: First of all, el oh el at some of these predictions. Marcus Paige hitting over half of his 3-pointers across the entire tournament? And what bold picks, with everyone taking either top-seeded North Carolina or No. 2 Virginia. Y'all haven't been paying attention to college basketball this season. Notre Dame FTW baby.



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Where will UNC land in the NCAA Tournament bracket?

Most media outlets list the Tar Heels as a No. 1 or No. 2 seed.

With conference tournaments in full swing, several media outlets have started making projections for this year's NCAA Tournament bracket.

After winning the ACC regular season championship, North Carolina might have secured a trip to Raleigh for the first and second rounds. But where will the Tar Heels go after that?

Here are what five outlets believe will happen to UNC come Selection Sunday.

ESPN: No. 1 seed in West



As of Tuesday, ESPN's Joe Lunardi listed the Tar Heels as the No. 1 seed in the West

Regional — which will be played in Anaheim, Calif. Lunardi had UNC playing its first- and second-round games in Raleigh, and he believed the No. 2, 3 and 4 seeds in the region would be Oregon, West Virginia and Kentucky, respectively.

CBS Sports: No. 3 seed in the West



Like Lunardi, CBS Sports had North Carolina playing its first- and second-round games in Raleigh and placed the team in the West Regional.

But as of Monday, CBS Sports had the Tar Heels as a No. 3 seed behind top-seeded Michigan State and second-seeded Oregon.

The outlet had UNC playing UAB in the first round before possibly playing sixth-seeded Iowa in the second. CBS Sports included

only one team (10th-seeded Temple) in the region that North Carolina played during the regular season.

USA TODAY: No. 2 seed in the East



As of Monday morning, USA Today had the Tar Heels as the No. 2 seed in the East Regional — which will be played in Philadelphia.

The outlet had Villanova as the top seed in the region. If UNC faced the Wildcats in the Elite Eight under those circumstances, Villanova would have a homecourt advantage, as the university is located about 30 minutes from Philadelphia.

USA Today had UNC playing 15th-seeded UNC-Asheville in the first round in Raleigh. And like ESPN, the outlet had West Virginia and Kentucky as the No. 3 and No. 4 seeds, respec-

tively.

NBC Sports: No. 2 seed in the West



NBC Sports' bracket projection had UNC as the No. 2 seed in the West Regional and second in line for a No. 1 seed behind Michigan State as of Tuesday.

Like USA Today's projection, NBC Sports had the Tar Heels playing UNC-Asheville in the first round of the NCAA Tournament in Raleigh.

According to the outlet's projections, the Tar Heels would face either Texas Tech or Vanderbilt in the second round with a win over the Bulldogs.

If UNC made it to the Elite Eight under those circumstances, it could face top-seeded Oklahoma for a spot in the Final Four.

Sports Illustrated: No. 2 seed in the East



As of Monday, Sports Illustrated had the Tar Heels in the East Regional as the No. 2 seed. Like USA Today, Sports

Illustrated had Villanova as the top seed in the region. Sports Illustrated included two teams (ninth-seeded Pittsburgh and 10th-seeded Temple) in the region that UNC played this season.

— Compiled by Sports Editor Pat James



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Players to watch in ACC Tournament

The ACC boasts some of the top players in the country year after year, and this season is no exception.

In addition to North Carolina senior forward Brice Johnson, the conference has two other players — Virginia's Malcolm Brogdon and Duke's Grayson Allen — who are among the 10 semifinalists for the Naismith Trophy.

The award has been presented to the country's top college basketball player each year since 1969, and the ACC has more semifinalists this season than any other conference.

As is the case across the college basketball landscape this season, a majority of the best players in the ACC are seniors.

Before the ACC Tournament kicked off on Tuesday, 12 of the top 25 scorers in the conference were seniors. This group did not include pivotal players like UNC's Marcus Paige, Miami's Tonye Jekiri and Angel Rodriguez, Duke's Marshall Plumlee and Pittsburgh's James Robinson.

Many of the conference's top players could stand in the way of the Tar Heels' quest for another ACC Tournament championship.

Here are eight players UNC could potentially face in the ACC Tournament semifinals or championship game.

— Compiled by Sports Editor Pat James

GRAYSON ALLEN

After coming off the bench for a majority of Duke's 2014-15 campaign, Grayson Allen has spearheaded Duke's offense this season.

The sophomore guard entered the ACC Tournament as the conference's second-leading scorer, averaging 21.5 points per game. He also proved to be one of the ACC's best 3-point shooters, shooting 42.3 percent from distance during the regular season.

Allen has been a solid option for Duke at the charity stripe, where he shot 83 percent on free throws.

In two games against North Carolina this season,



Allen averaged 26 points per game and went 7-for-16 on 3-pointers.

The Tar Heels could face Allen and the Blue Devils in the semifinals of the ACC Tournament.

ZACH AUGUSTE

As great as Brice Johnson has been on the boards all season for North Carolina, Notre Dame's Zach Auguste has almost been just as good.

Johnson leads the ACC with 10.8 rebounds per game this season, but Auguste entered the ACC Tournament just behind him — averaging 10.4 per contest.

The senior forward has also been a steady offensive option for the fourth-seeded Fighting Irish.

His 14.5 points per game during the regular season placed him 19th in the conference in scoring, and his 54.7



field goal percentage was ninth in the ACC.

If UNC and Notre Dame both win their quarterfinal games, the two teams would meet for the second time this season in Friday's semifinals.

MALCOLM BROGDON

Virginia guard Malcolm Brogdon edged out Brice Johnson for ACC Player of the Year and also captured the ACC Defensive Player of the Year award following a spectacular regular season. He is the first player to earn both honors since the ACC instituted the Defensive Player of the Year award.

The redshirt senior finished fourth in the ACC in scoring with 18.4 points per game. He also shot 41.1 percent on 3-pointers and 87.8 percent on free throws.

Brogdon led the Cavaliers' lockdown defense, which ranks No. 2 in the country



in scoring defense — allowing opponents to score 59.6 points per game.

The Tar Heels could face UVa. in the ACC Tournament championship game on Saturday.

BRANDON INGRAM

Brandon Ingram became the third straight Duke player to earn the ACC Freshman of the Year award — following in the footsteps of Jabari Parker and Jahlil Okafor.

The first-year forward averaged 16.7 points per game and was 14th in the ACC with 6.8 rebounds per game.

Like Allen, Ingram proved to be a difficult matchup from behind the 3-point line, shooting 40 percent from behind the arc.

Ingram averaged 15 points and nine rebounds in two games this season against North Carolina, although he was a combined 10-of-33



from the field in those games.

Many NBA draft analysts predict Ingram will be selected with one of the top picks in the upcoming draft, making him one of the best prospects in the country.

DEMETRIUS JACKSON

Notre Dame junior Demetrius Jackson has been one of the best point guards in the country this season.

He finished 11th in the ACC in scoring with 15.9 points per game, and his 5.0 assists per game placed him second in the conference behind Pittsburgh's James Robinson.

On the defensive end, Jackson led the Fighting Irish with 1.28 steals per game.

In North Carolina's loss to Notre Dame on Feb. 6, the junior scored 19 points, hauled in six rebounds, went 9-for-9 from the free throw line and recorded two steals.



Over the past two seasons, Jackson has averaged 15 points per game in three games against the Tar Heels — including Notre Dame's victory over UNC in the 2015 ACC Tournament final.

SHELDON MCCLELLAN

A second-team All-ACC selection by the Atlantic Coast Sports Media Association and the conference's coaches, Miami's Sheldon McClellan has been an offensive force for the Hurricanes this season.

The redshirt senior scored in double digits in every regular season ACC game en route to scoring 15.8 points per game during conference play.

According to KenPom.com, McClellan entered the ACC Tournament as the fifth-most efficient offensive player in the country among players used in 20 percent of possessions. The website also ranks the Miami guard as the 22nd-most efficient offensive player in the country among



all players.

When North Carolina faced the Hurricanes on Feb. 20 in Chapel Hill, McClellan scored 10 points in 18 minutes of playing time.

The Tar Heels could face Miami in the ACC Tournament championship game on Saturday.

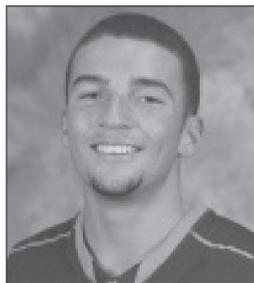
LONDON PERRANTES

After shooting 31.6 percent on 3-pointers a season ago, Virginia's London Perrantes has been the ACC's most lethal threat from behind the arc throughout the 2015-16 campaign.

The junior guard entered the ACC Tournament shooting 50.8 percent on 3-pointers this season, having made 60 of his 118 shots from distance. His 3-point shooting percentage is the best in the conference.

Perrantes' shooting touch has also been evident at the free throw line, where he's shot 82.9 percent. The mark is good for eighth in the ACC this season.

When North Carolina faced the Cavaliers on Feb.



27 in Charlottesville, Va., Perrantes shot 3-for-10 from the field and 2-for-5 on 3-pointers to finish the contest with 12 points.

During the 2015 ACC Tournament semifinals against UNC, he scored 12 points and went 1-for-3 on 3-pointers.

ANGEL RODRIGUEZ

Miami point guard Angel Rodriguez has been a catalyst for the Hurricanes on both sides of the ball this season.

The redshirt senior entered the ACC Tournament averaging 4.3 assists per game, good for eighth in the conference this season. His 129 assists were the sixth-most in the ACC.

On defense, Rodriguez — a third-team All-ACC selection by the Atlantic Coast Sports Media Association — finished seventh in the conference during the regular season with 1.47 steals per game.

In North Carolina's 96-71 win over the Hurricanes on Feb. 20 in Chapel Hill, Rodriguez tied for the team



lead with 12 points and five rebounds. He also tallied three assists and turned the ball over twice.

In seven games against ranked opponents this season, Rodriguez averaged 13.7 points, 4.6 assists and 1.7 turnovers per game, while also tallying 10 steals.

By the numbers: UNC's 2015-16 season

North Carolina goes into the postseason ranked No. 7 in this week's AP Top 25 Poll and as the No. 1 seed in the ACC Tournament.

The Tar Heels' 76-72 win over Duke on Saturday sealed the program's 30th ACC regular season title. Shortly after, senior forward Brice Johnson was named a unanimous first-team All-ACC selection. Junior forward Isaiah Hicks was named Sixth Man of the Year. And sophomore wing Justin Jackson and senior point guard Marcus Paige earned honorable mentions for All-ACC.

Here're the numbers behind UNC's winning season.

— Compiled by Editor-in-Chief Paige Ladisic.

1
The Tar Heels have just one player (Brice Johnson) who finished in the top 25 in the ACC in scoring, despite UNC leading the conference in scoring as a team at 82.9 points per game.

25
Number of times UNC has been the No. 1 seed in the ACC Tournament. See page 3 for UNC's record in the ACC Tournament when the team has been a No. 1 seed.

30
Number of times UNC has won

at least a share of the ACC regular season title. Duke has won the second-most regular season titles — 19.

10-0
The Tar Heels' record this season when attempting 20 or more 3-pointers in a game.

36
Number of times North Carolina has won 25 games in a season, including this year.

21
Coach Roy Williams has led teams at Kansas and UNC to

25 or more wins 21 times during his career as a head coach.

11
UNC is averaging 11.0 turnovers per game this season. The Tar Heels averaged nearly 13 turnovers per game a season ago, and this year's number would be the lowest since turnovers were first recorded in 1981-82.

16
Number of Tar Heels who have been a unanimous first-team All-ACC selection. Brice Johnson was the 16th. The last player to be a unanimous selection was Tyler Zeller in 2012.

22
UNC's six losses have been by a total of 22 points.

20
UNC has held 20 straight opponents to under 45 percent in field goal percentage.

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JOEL BERRY

FROM PAGE 1
treated me that I had made it a game.

"And it wasn't close." Over the next four years, Bowlin and Vallery would come to realize Berry was not only an incredible talent on the court — becoming the first player in Florida high school history to win the state's Mr. Basketball award three times — but an incredible leader and worker off it.

Waking up at 6 o'clock in the morning to ride to school in the white truck with his father, Berry was constantly in the gym.

"Every time I got to school, he was already probably 45 minutes into his workout," Vallery said.

When he wasn't in the gym or texting Bowlin about getting in the gym, he might have been cracking jokes with his teammates or impersonating Bowlin and making fun of his height. He liked to laugh, and he liked to make the people around him laugh. Despite being

"I think Joel Berry lives by that," Bowlin said. "Not only do I hope that in my time that I was able to sharpen him, but he sharpened me."

'Enjoy the journey'

Now, Joel Berry stands outside of the locker room in the Smith Center one day ahead of the ACC Tournament, a sophomore and starting point guard on the top-seeded North Carolina men's basketball team, averaging 12.3 points per game and shooting a team-best 36.9 percent on 3-pointers.

He's turned into a pivotal player for the Tar Heels after missing much of his first season in Chapel Hill because of injuries.

"You watch him play with the confidence that he has this year compared to last year," Vallery said. "Because he's been able to stay pretty much injury free and get playing time and get confidence through that. He's just starting to soar."

But even after becoming an ACC regular season

recruit, not yet a star player. It's what he thought about when he walked through the Carolina Basketball Museum and realized when he came to Chapel Hill he would be joining more than a team. He would be joining a brotherhood.

"When he saw those pictures and how close all those guys were from year to year and how those guys still come back to Carolina

during the summer to play, I told him that's what you want to be a part of," Berry Sr. said.

"Those are the guys that are selfless ... you can see they build a lifelong relationship, and that's what it's all about."

Berry Sr. would be proud — he is proud. For him, it's never been about the stats or the awards or the championships.

"I told him that's what you want to be a part of. Those are the guys that are selfless."

It's always been about more than basketball. "That's basically it," Berry Sr. said. "Just be patient, and don't rush the journey. Enjoy every moment of it."

"Put it in God's hand, and enjoy the journey." Enjoy the ride in the white truck.

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sports@dailytarheel.com

"When I leave here I want to be able to say that I have a bond outside of just being out on the court."

the butt of his jokes, Bowlin nicknamed Berry Kevin Hart.

"I think that's what makes him a great leader," Bowlin said. "One of the hallmarks of a leader is to connect with individuals ... His ability to make people laugh, you know, just defuses situations."

Whether through his talent, his humor, his work ethic — or the combination of them all — Berry became the leader of his team by his sophomore season, constantly trying to improve himself and his teammates around him.

Bowlin likes to draw a comparison of Berry to his favorite bible verse, Proverbs 27:17: "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."

champion and solidifying himself in perhaps the toughest collegiate basketball conference in the country, Berry thinks back to those conversations with his father.

"We would just sit there and talk about things going on in my life and things to do to improve myself," Berry said. "And not as a basketball player but as a person ... When I leave here I want to be able to say that I have a bond outside of just being out on the court. I want to be able to know my teammates and just laugh and joke around with them."

"And that's what builds chemistry, and that's what I love most about this team."

That's what Berry anticipated when he visited UNC back when he was still a

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Readers weigh in on UNC men's basketball superstitions

What do you do to make sure the Tar Heels play well?

There's nothing like North Carolina basketball to bring out the superstitious sports fan in all of us, right? We've found that people will do all kinds of things to keep their good luck going for a UNC game — they'll even lock family members in the bathroom if the team is doing well while they're gone.

We asked fans to submit their superstitions for basketball games online, and we chose the best to print here.

Submissions have been edited for clarity and length.

Be sure you 'go where you go and do what you do'



I always attempt to wear something UNC-related all day long on game day (or longer if I'm concerned about it being a really difficult matchup), as it's important to build plenty of good karma well before game time. Even my husband, who's not much of a spectator sports person, recognizes the importance of appropriate attire on game day.

I had a high school coach (a UNC graduate who played baseball here) who told us cutting our hair or shaving on game day was a no-no. So I still follow that rule, though some seasons it requires a bit of tweaking (this season appears to be one of those).

Attempting to bolster one of Roy's lucky rituals, my husband and I spit twice in the Mississippi for Final Fours; but it turns out that's a tricky one.

The 2005 St. Louis spit returned positive results, but the 2008 stop in Baton Rouge en route to San Antonio was evidently the wrong location (or maybe the number of spitters is also important; more data points required to figure this one out).

Regardless of the ritual, though, we older Tar Heels

must make it a point to pass down those crucial words of wisdom from Woody. When game time is close, you just gotta be sure you "go where you go and do what you do!"

A special uniform just for Duke-UNC games



I used to have a complete uniform just for the Duke games. Full white sweats with blue lettering on the chest and legs. A long sleeve gray UNC basketball crewneck. Underneath I wore a classic blue UNC T-shirt. That was back when Dean was dominating Coach K something like eight out of nine games. Then we went on a losing streak, and that uniform has been stored in a Carolina Blue bag in my closet for 20 years.

Watching the game in my lucky game recliner



I'm a 73-year-old woman from Pennsylvania who has been a UNC basketball fan for over 40 years.

I have to wear UNC fleece pants, blue UNC shirt (different one for home games) and sit in a special recliner. Lay back during timeouts with hands behind my head, and sit up with knees up during play. Yes, I know it's nuts, as many of my friends tell me. If they lose, the clothes get washed to wash the loss out. If they win, I wear them dirty!

Don't let the cat out of the house



When UNC plays Duke, we won't let the cat out of the house. For some reason we feel that cats and Blue Devils are apt to make certain deals and be in cahoots, and we don't want to take that chance when the stakes are so high.

'Yeah, really. I sit in the car.'



My mom used to iron clothes. It kept her hands busy. Once her MD progressed to where she couldn't stand at the board, she started folding laun-

dry. She figured it was close enough to ironing to work.

During the ACC Tournament, she cooked. Everybody dropped in from work during whatever breaks they got. By supper the house was full of peeps and food.

Now that she has passed,

I do both. I cook and fold. Plus I still do my personal tradition of moving room to room depending on the score. A couple of times, I've been in the car at tip. So if we get behind once I go inside, I go back out an sit in the car. Yeah, really. I sit in the car.

No matter where you are, put your arms up



I put my arms up for free throws. Even if I'm at the bar with friends or even if I'm just watching by myself at home.

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