

No. 10 Tar Heels lean on small lineup

North Carolina relying on the 3-point shot this year more than any in Williams' tenure at school

BY AARON BEARD
ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHAPEL HILL — The 3-pointers are going up in bunches for No. 10 North Carolina, even if it's not the look-inside-first style preferred by Hall of Fame coach

Roy Williams.

The Tar Heels are launching 3s at the highest rate of his 15-year tenure at his alma mater entering Saturday's game against in-state rival North Carolina State. And it seems unlikely to change

much, not as they lean on a small-ball starting lineup while lacking the two consistent post threats Williams covets to attack the glass, score an easy bucket or put opponents in foul trouble. Williams is still pushing

for more inside-out balance, though it's unclear whether the roster's structure is capable of producing it.

"I appreciate your question because I'm still trying," Williams said, "because I think we still need that. You ask me after the last game, I'll tell you whether I failed or succeeded."

The Tar Heels (16-5, 5-3 Atlantic Coast Conference)

are shooting 37 percent from 3-point range, similar to the combined average for Williams' previous 14 seasons. The difference is volume; they're averaging 21.9 attempts while 3s account for 34 percent of their overall shot attempts.

Those numbers are even higher since Williams turned

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Patricia bringing the beard back to the Super Bowl

BY JIMMY GOLEN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — It may have been his last game in New England, and Matt Patricia wasn't ready for it to end.

The Patriots defensive coordinator went back onto the field long after the AFC championship was over and the team had advanced to the Super Bowl for the sixth time in his tenure.

There, he tossed around a football with his son before flopping onto his back on the confetti that had fallen during the team's celebration.

"(It was) just fun to have him out there running around and just seeing the excitement that he had to be out on the field," Patricia said this week as he tried to maintain his focus on the Super Bowl and not his expected next step: as head coach of the Detroit Lions. "That's always just kind of a special little moment for myself and him and my wife."

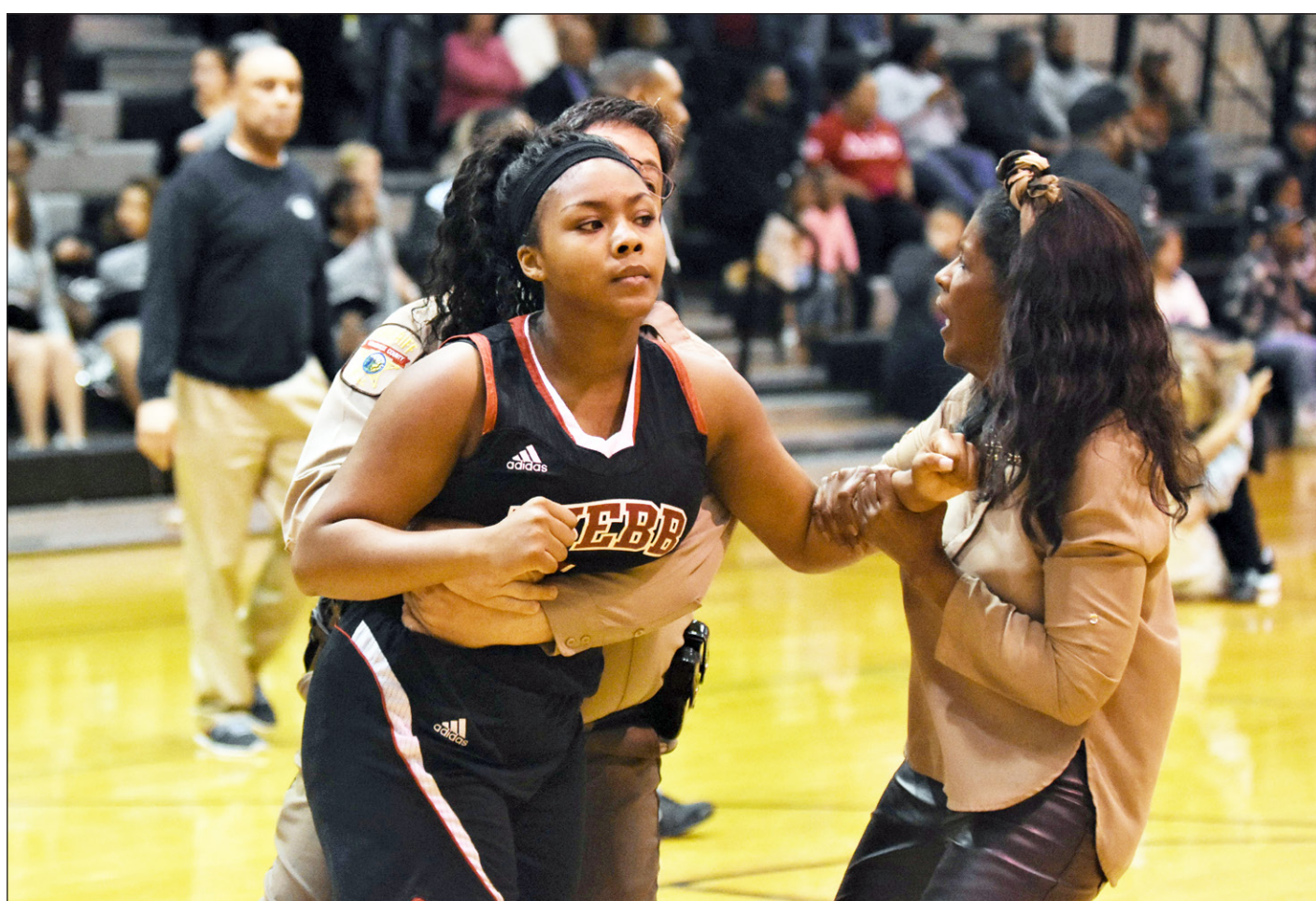
Most identifiable by his bushy beard, backward-facing ball cap and cargo shorts or cutoff sweatpants no matter what the weather, Patricia will be on the Patriots sideline on Feb. 4, when they face the Philadelphia Eagles in an attempt to win their sixth NFL championship.

Then he will reportedly be hired as the Lions head coach.

Patricia has declined to comment on the Detroit job other than to confirm that he "went through the process that the NFL allows us to go through during the bye week."

The Lions confirmed that they interviewed Patricia and reportedly informed the unsuccessful candidates, but they cannot

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BY LOGAN ULRICH/Dispatch photo

J.F. Webb junior Kaley Brown is pulled away from the fight by a Granville County law enforcement officer after a brawl broke out during a girls basketball game between the Warriors and Granville Central. Both teams cleared the benches during the fight and several spectators ran onto the court from the stands and were involved, causing officials to cancel both the remainder of the game and the varsity boys game scheduled to follow.

'This is a black eye'

Brawl ends girls hoops game between Warriors, Panthers

BY LOGAN ULRICH
SPORTS EDITOR

Bodies hit the floor and a whistle blew.

That part wasn't unusual. Referees had already called 28 fouls in the girls

basketball game between J.F. Webb and Granville Central.

But the ensuing altercation between two players mushroomed into a bench-clearing fight with spectators racing from the stands to join the melee.

Some officials present said it was one of the worst fights they had ever seen in their time watching high school basketball.

"It was ugly," J.F. Webb head coach Paul White said. "Uncalled for, unnecessary, embarrassed. I'm very embarrassed for the program, for both programs. High school athletics should not be about this, it should not come to fisticuffs on the basketball court."

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No. 4 Duke awaits No. 2 Virginia and its nation-best 'D'

BY JOEDY MCCREARY
ASSOCIATED PRESS

DURHAM — No. 4 Duke has piled up huge point totals and impressive offensive numbers against every opponent on its schedule.

Now comes the biggest test to date — second-ranked Virginia and the nation's best defense.

It sets up one of the most intriguing chess matches of the season,

and certainly the game of the year in the Atlantic Coast Conference — at least, so far — between the Blue Devils (18-2, 6-2) and the Cavaliers (19-1, 8-0) on Saturday.

"They're going to play their game — you're not going to speed them up," guard Grayson Allen said Friday. "But we're also going to play our game."

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Showdown headlines busy weekend in ACC

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A LOOK AT THE UPCOMING WEEK AROUND THE ACC

GAME OF THE WEEK-END: No. 2 Virginia at No. 4 Duke. The lone regular-season meeting of these top-five teams qualifies as the game of the year in the conference — at least, so far. The first-place Cavaliers (19-1, 8-0) bring an 11-game winning streak into Cameron Indoor Stadium, where they haven't won since 1995. Few have kept it compet-

itive there this season against the Blue Devils, with all but one of their home wins coming by double figures. Duke (18-2, 6-2) has the nation's top offense, averaging nearly 92 points, while Virginia has the top defense in Division I, allowing fewer than 52 points per game. The key question: How does Virginia's tough, but undersized, defense keep Duke's tough front line of Marvin Bagley III and Wendell Carter Jr. out of the paint?

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CORRECTION

In the January 26 article titled "Four the Win," Kerr-Vance Academy junior Thomas Miles was incorrectly referred to twice as "Thomas Morrison." The Daily Dispatch apologizes for the error.

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Palmer takes lead, Woods makes cut

BY DOUG FERGUSON
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN DIEGO — Ryan Palmer is the 36-hole leader in the Farmers Insurance Open. Jon Rahm is right behind, poised to reach No. 1 in the world. And for the first time in 29 months, a PGA Tour event will feature Tiger Woods on the weekend.

Palmer finished eagle-birdie on the North Course at Torrey Pines for a 5-under 67. That gave him a one-shot lead over Rahm, the defending champion who birdied two of his last three holes on the North for a 66.

The biggest buzz, as usual, was for Woods. He kept his fairway-lined following in suspense over his closing stretch on the

front nine Friday simply by trying to make the cut, and it came down to the very last hole.

A wild drive was saved by a perfect flop shot to escape with par on No. 6. Another superb chip on the reachable par-4 seventh set up a birdie, the first time all week he was under par. A chip that bounced hard and rolled off the back of the green led to bogey and left him one shot outside the cut line. From gnarly rough right of the fairway on the par-5 ninth, he hammered a 6-iron to the wrong side of the green, leaving him two putts from 75 feet to make birdie and get to the weekend.

A beautiful lag for a tap-in birdie gave him a 71.

"It was a grind. I fought

hard," Woods said. "Typical. Just me going out there and fighting for whatever I can get. It's all good."

There's a reason Woods has gone so long — August 2015 at the Wyndham Championship — without making a cut. This was only his second PGA Tour since then, the greatest reminder of back surgeries that effectively cost two full years of golf.

He won the first battle — two more days.

And even with Woods lingering toward the bottom, there are plenty of big names lingering going into the weekend. Jason Day had a 64 and was four shots behind. Phil Mickelson, who hasn't fared all that on the South Course since

the redo ahead of the 2008 U.S. Open, ran off a string of birdies on the front nine, salvaged a few mistakes with an eagle on No. 13 and finished with a birdie for a 68. He was five shots behind.

Rahm was five shots behind going into the weekend last year and closed with a 65, holding a 50-foot eagle putt on the final hole. That was his first victory, and he has added three more worldwide. Few players have more confidence at Torrey Pines.

Even when he wasn't sure where the ball was going off the tee, he didn't drop a shot.

"Things are going well, you're playing good so you're trying to get a little higher, a little higher," he said.

PATRICIA

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make it official until after the Patriots are done playing.

"We're just trying to get the win," defensive lineman Trey Flowers said on Friday. "That's all it's about here."

But for Patricia, that's not all it's about.

Players say he takes a special interest in them, talking to them not just as players but also asking about their families.

"It's not just to coach you up," linebacker Elandor Roberts said. "That's a must for him. That shows what kind of man he is outside of the building. He takes pride in us as players, but he also takes pride in us as people."

Taking a rarely followed path to the NFL, Patricia graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute with four varsity letters and an Aeronautical Engineering degree.

He bounced around a few colleges in the Northeast before landing on Bill Belichick's staff with the then-defending Super Bowl champions.

Moving up through the team's coaching ranks, he became the Patriots defensive coordinator in 2012.

Before most every game, Patricia walks up to every player on the sideline and shakes his hand.

"It just lets us know he has our back," safety Duron Harmon said. "He has our back; we've got his back. It's nothing more than just a relationship that he's built with everybody throughout the defense."

"And when you've got that from your coach, knowing that he's going to go down for you and you're going to go down for him it makes you want to go out there and lay it down for him."

Walker scores 29, hits big 3s in Hornets' win

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHARLOTTE — Kemba Walker scored 29 points and made two key 3-pointers down the stretch that helped the Charlotte Hornets beat the Atlanta Hawks 121-110 on Friday night.

Nicolas Batum and Michael Kidd-Gilchrist each added 19 points as Charlotte rallied to regain a lead it maintained since the second period, but surrendered halfway through the fourth. Dwight Howard added 18 points and 15 rebounds, while Jeremy Lamb

scored 12 points off the bench.

Marvin Williams finished with 11 points for the Hornets.

Kent Bazemore led Atlanta with 26 points and Taurean Prince added 21. Mike Muscala helped Atlanta take a brief fourth-quarter lead with 14 points, but the Hawks fell to

0-2 in the season series. Ersan Ilyasova and Dennis Schroder scored 11 points apiece for Atlanta.

John Collins shot 4 for 5 for 10 points for the Hawks, who entered the night tied with the Orlando Magic for the NBA's worst record.

EYE

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With 1:27 remaining in the third quarter, Warriors sophomore Naiasha Latta was knocked over by Panthers sophomore Donaisha Long as they both went for a loose ball. Latta got up and had words with Long. Tensions boiled over and both players started swinging at each other, falling to the floor again.

Moments later, players and coaches from both teams streamed onto the court, followed closely by several spectators from both sides of the gym. At least one adult, a woman, was involved in an altercation with a Granville Central player and had to be dragged away. It was several minutes before school officials and law

enforcement officers were able to clear the mayhem from the court.

White said none of his players suffered any injuries to his knowledge, although one player received medical attention for an anxiety attack after she was caught up in the conflict.

No injuries were reported or confirmed for Granville Central. Head coach and athletic director Ray Noel declined to comment.

When control of the gym had been re-established, an officer with the Granville County Sheriff's Department who was working security for the school that night told all parents and fans to leave the gym. Shortly after, the remainder of the game, which J.F. Webb led 36-23 at the time, was canceled, along with the varsity boys game that was supposed to follow.

"Right now, I'm hurting," White said.

"I'm hurting for myself, both teams, the coaching staffs for both teams, the community. This is a black eye. It's hard to overcome stuff like this in a small community."

Per the North Carolina High School Athletic Association, three ejections for fighting are enough for any team to be disqualified from the playoffs that season. It was unclear last night how many players officials would eject from the game, but it appeared likely to meet that threshold.

Based on other cases of high school basketball brawls in North Carolina, each school could also be subject to a \$1,000 fine for players leaving the bench area.

Game officials have 24 hours to report results to the NCHSAA, which will then likely render its verdict in the coming week.

DUKE

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We're going to stick to what's been successful."

Duke brings the nation's best offense, averaging 91.7 points while scoring at least 80 points in every game but one. The Blue Devils have faced four teams ranked in the top 50 in Ken Pomeroy's defensive efficiency rankings — three in the top 10 — and still found ways to put up big numbers.

They scored 85 points in an overtime victory over Texas (ranked sixth by KenPom) in the PK80, put up 83 on the road at Miami (ninth) and scored 88 in a neutral-site win over Michigan State (10th) while also outscoring 48th-ranked Florida State 100-93. They have shot at least 39.5 percent in each game and dominated the glass, with an average rebounding margin of plus-11.5 in those four games.

"You've got to move the ball. What they're really good at is, a lot of times,

it looks like five guys are defending the ball because everyone's ready to help and recover," Allen said. "The ball has to be moved. The offense can't be stagnant."

The Cavaliers seemingly have reloaded coach Tony Bennett's pack-line defense, and after starting the season unranked have reeled off 11 straight wins while climbing to No. 2 in the national polls. Virginia allows just 51.6 points per game, tops in the country, and only two teams — No. 7 West Virginia (68) and Virginia Commonwealth (67) — have scored more than 61 points against it.

But neither of those teams has the offensive explosiveness the Blue Devils do, with Duke averaging roughly 11 more possessions per game than the Cavaliers.

"Every game in this league is big, of course. Duke, at Cameron (Indoor Stadium), all that and there'll be a big story line made of it and what it will come down to is what it comes down to every game," Bennett said. "It's not even who is the

best team, it's who plays the best."

The key could be whether the Cavaliers can keep Duke's elite front line — led by freshman big men Marvin Bagley III and Wendell Carter Jr. — in check, whether that's keeping them off the offensive glass or making it tough for guards Allen and freshmen Trevon Duval and Gary Trent Jr. to rotate the ball and to prevent them from passing into the post.

The Blue Devils rank third nationally in offensive rebounding, averaging nearly 15, and Bagley is eighth individually with an average of four. So the Cavaliers can't afford to give Duke's big men all those second chances to score. That'll be a challenge for a Virginia team that ranks 239th on the defensive glass, and puts pressure on 6-foot-10 center Jack Salt and 6-8 forward Isaiah Wilkins.

"It's going to be a really good test for us, and we're looking forward to it," Virginia guard Kyle Guy said.

ACC

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LOOKING AHEAD: Louisville (15-5, 5-2) is quietly putting together an impressive season under rookie coach David Padgett, winning six of its first seven conference games to climb into second place in the league standings before an overtime loss at Miami dropped the Cardinals to third. They won't take anything for granted this weekend against struggling Wake Forest, of course, but their biggest game under him comes next Wednesday night when they visit Virginia.

PLAYER TO WATCH: Tyus Battle has simply carried Syracuse at times this season. The sophomore point guard has scored in double figures in 15 straight games, ranking third in the conference with an average of 19.8 points. His best performance was his 37-point game in a double-overtime loss to Florida State in which he made 11 shots — the second time this season he's done that — and

hit 10 of 13 free throws.

INSIDE THE NUMBERS: The Bagley-Carter tandem has the Blue Devils in some elite company. With those two big men leading the way, Duke ranks fourth in the nation in rebounding margin at plus-10.4. Only twice in the previous eight years has Duke finished a season ranked in the top 50 in that stat — and both years the Blue Devils captured national championships. Duke was 28th behind Jahlil Okafor and Justise Winslow in 2014-15, and 14th in 2009-10 with Brian Zoubek and Lance Thomas.

ON THE WOMEN'S SIDE: The top of the women's standings is a mess, with four teams — Louisville, Notre Dame, Florida State and Virginia — at 6-1 in league play entering Thursday night's games. Things should start to clear up at least somewhat on Sunday when the Fighting Irish visit the Seminoles. Florida State is coming off a 50-49 victory over the Cardinals that marked their first loss of the season.

TAR HEELS

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to the small starting lineup five games ago, with 3s accounting for nearly 41 percent of UNC's shots (26 per game).

Consider that UNC averaged 16.6 attempts before this year while 3s accounted for just 26 percent of shot attempts.

"He's OK with the 3s, as long as they're in the continuity of the offense and as long as you've proven you can make them," said 6-foot-8 junior Luke Maye, who is shooting 49 percent from behind the arc. "We have so many good shooters on our team so I think he's given some of our guys a lot more leeway than others."

Ask Williams about his comfort level with his players taking a lot of 3s, he'll often bring up that he's fine with it when he has guys like future pros Wayne Ellington, Ty Lawson and Danny Green on his 2009 NCAA championship squad. But that team also had program career scoring and rebounding leader Tyler Hansbrough inside.

Last year's national championship team took more 3s than nearly all its predecessors, too, though there was also reliable interior play from Kennedy Meeks, Isaiah Hicks and Tony Bradley to balance it out.

This team just doesn't have that. Maye (18.0 points, 10.4 rebounds) is a stretch-4 playing in the middle of the small lineup featuring outside shooters in Joel Berry II, Cameron Johnson and

Kenny Williams alongside swingman Theo Pinson. The big men are all unproven freshmen in Sterling Manley (5.8 points), Garrison Brooks (5.1) and Brandon Huffman (1.9).

"They're traditionally playing with two post guys, and now they're using more of a four-guard front as most people are," first-year Wolfpack coach Kevin Keatts said. "It makes them a little bit more dangerous, because they can spread you out, they can make shots."

"The younger guys are coming along as post guys, but right now the strength of their team is from the guard play."

Still, it's made the offense more volatile. An off 3-point shooting night only magnifies the lack of consistent inside production, while the reliance

on outside shots instead of forcing the ball into the teeth of the defense can limit trips to the foul line.

The Tar Heels are averaging 20.1 free throws a game, the second-lowest of Williams' UNC tenure and just 14.6 attempts in ACC games.

Monday's loss at Virginia Tech highlighted Williams' concerns, with his team shooting 30 3s — he didn't like the shot selection on about a half-dozen — and rarely got to the line.

"It's not just throwing the ball to the big guy," Williams said. "It's driving the ball to the basket. I'm always saying get the ball in the lane by passing or dribbling. We shot five free throws the other night, guys. Five free throws, in an up-and-down game. We cannot play that way and be successful."