Cheerleaders, dance team skip Final Four trip for chance at NCA glory

By Kimberly Rieck
Sports Editor

While the “White” cheerleading squad supports the men’s basketball team in its Final Four pursuits, the “Gold” squad will be competing at the National Cheerleaders Association (NCA)’s 2004 Chick-fil-A Cheer and Dance Collegiate Championship in Daytona, Fla. Preliminary competitions began yesterday and will continue through this weekend.

Traditionally the “Gold” squad covers men’s basketball and football duties, however, the squad has been preparing since October for nationals. The “White” squad typically performs at the women’s basketball and volleyball games.

Tech’s nationals squad has 12 guys and eight girls. “We’re all planning on watching the [Final Four] together while we’re down in Daytona,” said Head Coach Lauren Gryszkiewicz.

Tech is competing against 19 other Division I-A schools, in what’s traditionally known as the hardest competition at the championship. There are several divisions at the competition that range from small co-ed schools to large universities such as Florida State.

Last year the team finished 11th overall after finishing fourth in preliminaries. “Last year we were physically ready and we were a bit mentally off the morning of finals and I think that’s what led to our deductions and that’s why I started having the team work with the sports psychologist,” Gryszkiewicz said.

The team only has two minutes and 15 seconds to perform a routine that encompasses everything from dance to gymnastics to tumbling. “It really doesn’t matter how many others we practice, you only get that one chance,” said team co-captain Susanne Nelson.

In addition, team co-captain King Harrison and Mary Melissa Bailey are performing in the partner stunt competition. Harrison and Bailey were awarded a spot after placing in the top 20 in a preliminary round held at a earlier date.

Buzz will be competing in the mascot competition and aiming to earn his third NCA Mascot of the Year title. The dance team is also competing in the event for the first time ever. “I think we have a better chance that we’ve ever had. It’s the most talented team and I’m very happy with how the squad has come together and if there’s been a year that we could win it all, I would say this is the year,” Gryszkiewicz said.
Devoted Tech fans see hoop dreams come true in St. Louis

By Edward Tamsberg
Staff Writer

The first time the Yellow Jackets made it to the Final Four, I was watching from the floor of my living room, with my knees tucked under me. I had to sacrifice sleeping that night to see the Final Four in real time. It was a defining moment for my family and I, and I’ll never forget the excitement and joy that accompanied that moment.

This year, the Yellow Jackets made it to the Final Four again, and I was there to witness it in person. I was in St. Louis for the regional tournament games, and I watched every minute of the games. It was an experience that I would never forget.

The Edward Jones Dome is home to the St. Louis Rams during the NFL season, and the NCAA was only using half of the capacity to host the regional tournament games. However, the area of stands that was open to seating was at one side of the circular shape. It was a bit of a disappointment, but somehow the players and coaches made the best of it and put on a great show.

At the beginning of this year, we all made a commitment to get better and improve our game,” said Marvin Lewis, Team captain.

When Bosh was with us, it was as if all the other guys on the team and the fans were always waiting for Bosh to do something—like they were just watching him play or something,” said one other player.

This year didn’t start off much better. There were rumors of players leaving and many skeptics took the opportunity to take shots at the Yellow Jackets’ seemingly fragile status. With Bosh gone, many thought our best had left us and that this would be simply a rebuilding year.

“Despite all those rumors and despite the pressure of critics and skeptics, each and every player was focused on one point: improvement. They knew differently. At the beginning of this year we all made a commitment to get better and improve our game,” said senior Marvin Lewis at a press conference after the Kansas game.

Some great teams have great players and good coaches, but the consistently great teams have good players and great coaches. Every player has a level of natural talent and ability that they are born with, but only a coach can teach a player to be better and make them realize a level of potential they never had before.

When Jarrett Jack, Clarence Moore and others step out onto the court, Coach Hewitt sees a piece of himself stepping out there to play, and he is not a loser. Paul Hewitt, by many people’s opinions, replaced a legend. It was only natural that there would be little expectation for this coach from seemingly nowhere to live up to the record of Bobby Cremins. But when Hewitt would call a time-out during many of the important games this season, he was calm and centered—there was no pressure. His belief and trust in his players was what kept them together during those games, and it was what brought them together during the season.

It was 14 years ago when Tech lost to UNLV, who then went on to be the tournament champion that year. Things are different now. Now, Bobby Cremins is retired and lives within driving distance from where I watched that magical season so long ago. On Saturday, Tech will make only its second appearance in the Final Four in school history, playing Oklahoma State for a spot in the championship.

I still wear my sweatshirt that my uncle bought for me 14 years ago, but it fits me now.

Submit a sliver and we’ll print it in the paper!
Go to www.nique.net/sliver, and express your feelings!
Headed to the Alamodome? Check out the Jackets’ competition

On March 18 around 12:20 p.m. EST, the 2004 NCAA Men’s Basketball Tournament tipped off with 64 teams and a number of upsets later, the field has been reduced to a fabulous final four.

Here’s a look at the last four teams standing and an idea of what to expect this weekend in San Antonio’s Alamodome.

**Georgia Tech**

**Conference:** ACC  
**2004 record:** 31-3  
**Era:**  
**Location:** Atlanta  
**Enrollment:** 15,000

*How they got here:*  
1st Round: def. (14) Northern Iowa 65-60  
2nd Round: def. (6) Boston College 57-54  
Regional semifinal: def. (10) Nevada 72-67  
Regional final: def. (4) Kansas 79-71

**Nickname(s):** Yellow Jackets, Ramblin’ Wreck  
**Engineers**

**Conference:** ACC  
**2004 record:** 31-3  
**Era:**  
**Location:** Stillwater, OK  
**Enrollment:** 18,676

*How they got here:*  
1st Round: def. (15) Eastern Washington 75-56  
2nd Round: def. (7) Memphis 70-53  
Regional semifinal: def. (3) Pittsburgh 63-51  
Regional final: def. (1) St. Joseph’s 64-62

**Team MVP:** Tony Allen-G  
**Unsung Hero:** Clarence Moore-F

*Why OSU could cut down the nets:*  
The Cowboys are perhaps the most physically and mentally torrid Nevada group. Heck, they should be, considering Coach Eddie Sutton uses football tactics in practices to ensure that his team is physically superior or its opponent. The Cowboys fear no one and will look to impose their will early and often as soon as the ball is tossed in the air. It doesn’t hurt that the Cowboys have a sensational point guard running the show in senior John Lucas III, a transfer from Baylor. Lucas hit the big-game-winning three to outh St. Joe’s last Saturday.

He and Tony Allen, OSU’s leading scorer at 16.2 per contest, form one of the best backcourt combinations in the country. Throw in sharp shooting small forward Joey Graham and bruising power forward Ivan McFarlin, and the Pokes can hurt you in a variety of ways. Oklahoma State’s physical toughness has translated to mental toughness as well. They are tough to topple because a team must defeat them from both aspects, physical and mental, to have a chance to win.

**Duke**

**Conference:** ACC  
**2004 record:** 31-5  
**Era:**  
**Location:** Atlanta Regional Champions (No. 1 seed)  
**Enrollment:** 21,192

*How they got here:*  
1st Round: def. (16) Alabama State 96-61  
2nd Round: def. (6) Seton Hall 90-62  
Regional semifinal: def. (5) Illinois 72-62  
Regional final: def. (7) Xavier 66-63  
Team MVP: Chris Duhon-PG  
**Unsung Hero:** Daniel Ewing-G

*Why Duke could cut down the nets:*  
Simple. Duke has Mike Krzyzewski on the sideline and a mental edge over just about everyone they play. Furthermore, they’re hungry.

The Devils have not been to the Final Four since 2001, which is like an eternity if you’re a Duke fan. The Dookies survived a scare against Xavier in the Atlanta Regional Final, but fans may forget that Xavier was the hottest team in the country. Duke is still Duke. They communicate as well if not better than any team in the nation. They give their absolute best on the floor and in all of America. When the Huskies are healthy and playing smart basketball, as they are right now, they’re more than a handful.

**Connecticut**

**Conference:** Big East  
**2004 record:** 31-6  
**Era:**  
**Location:** Storrs, CT  
**Enrollment:** 22,000

*How they got here:*  
1st Round: def. (15) Vermont 70-53  
2nd Round: def. (8) Seton Hall 90-62  
Regional semifinal: def. (5) Illinois 72-62  
Regional final: def. (7) Xavier 66-63

**Team MVP:** Ben Gordon-G and Emeka Okafor-C  
**Unsung Hero:** Rashad Anderson-G

*Why UConn could cut down the nets:*  
Jim Calhoun’s teams are historically as athletic as they come, and this edition is no exception. The preseason No. 1 team is clicking on all cylinders right now and has simply over-matched its four tournament opponents, in steamrolling convincingly.

The Huskies are loaded everywhere: at the guard position with Gordon, Taliek Brown, Denham Brown and sweet shooting sophomore Rashad Anderson, and underneath with Okafor. This is probably the most talented team on paper in all of America. When the Huskies are healthy and playing smart basketball, as they are right now, they’re more than a handful.

**First Semi-final: Georgia Tech vs. Oklahoma State**  
**Location:** St. Petersburg, FL  
**Enrollment:** 6,007  
**Era:**  
**What to expect:**  
This game will be a low-scoring, defensive struggle. Tech likes to get out and run, while Oklahoma State would prefer a half-court game. The Cowboys, however, can run if necessary. The game will be nip and tuck and the team that can make the most big plays down the stretch will come out victorious.

**Second Semi-final: Duke vs. UConn**  
**Location:** St. Petersburg, FL  
**Enrollment:** 8,474  
**Era:**  
**What to expect:**  
The flashbulbs will be abundant in this one, as the Blue Devils and Huskies will meet for the first time in NCAA Tournament action since the 1999 National Championship Game in St. Petersburg, FL. This will be one of the most entertaining Final Four games in recent memory. Look for both teams to scorched the nets early. The first half will be a hotly-contested offensive slugfest. UConn will go on a run to start the second half, led by the shooting of Gordon and Anderson. Duke will make a vintage run late, but it may not be enough.

**Final: Winner of Oklahoma State vs. Georgia Tech**  
**Location:** St. Petersburg, FL  
**Enrollment:**  
**Era:**  
**What to expect:**  
The Blue Devils and Huskies will meet for the first time in NCAA Tournament action since the 1999 National Championship Game in St. Petersburg, FL. This will be one of the most entertaining Final Four games in recent memory. Look for both teams to score heavy early. The first half will be a hotly-contested offensive slugfest. UConn will go on a run to start the second half, led by the shooting of Gordon and Anderson. Duke will make a vintage run late, but it may not be enough.
Kansas from page 28
game versus Nevada. Nevada guard
Kirk Snyder fell on Elder’s leg after
an attempted lob pass from a team-
mate that was deflected by Tech’s
Anthony McHenry. Elder badly
sprained his right ankle on the play.
However, the Jayhawks could not
take advantage of a short-handed,
but deep, Tech team. Jack received
help from center Lake Scherscher,
forwards Clarence Moore and Isma’il
Muhammad, and guard Will
Bynum.

With a game tied at 71 in over-
time, Jack drove the left baseline
but was cut off by a Kansas defend-
er. He kicked the ball out to a wide-
open Bynum at the top of the key.
Bynum easily drilled a three pointer
to give Tech the lead with under
two minutes to play.

“I take my hat off to Georgia
Tech,” said Kansas point guard Aaron
Miles.

“Jarrett Jack made a lot of plays
for them. Every time they needed
something, boom! He was there for
them.”

Tech will face Oklahoma State
in Game 1 of the Final Four in San
Antonio beginning at approximately
6:07 p.m. EST tomorrow evening.

Duke and Connecticut will face
off at 6:07 p.m. EST tomorrow.
Fourth-seeded Kansas would go on
be going up against a Kansas team
that had made the previous two Fi-
nal Fours and had brought nearly
four years as a high-flying act. Tech

planes have become a - - - customary to seeing. With the
shot clock
time, Jack drove the left baseline
and ended up nearly
horizontal to the
court in a full-extension re-
verse lay-up. The crowd was stupe-
ified. Tech took the 69-67 lead and
would hold on to make the Elite
Eight, 72-67.

Lewis’ Time to Shine

With leading scorer Elder out
for the remainder of the game, Se-
rior Marvin Lewis caught the hot-
hand for the night and his teammates
just kept feeding him.

“Everybody said we’ve got to pick
up our games,” Lewis said. “B.J. is a
guy that brings a lot of firepower in
regards to scoring. He’s our leader.
But everybody just said, ‘we’ve got
to do without him and move on.’

Lewis would score 23 points –
the only Jacket in double figures.
But it was plenty, as he was also hot
from beyond the arc, shooting 4-9.

The most impressive stretch occurred
when Tech finally gained the lead,
63-58, behind consecutive three-
pointers by Lewis.

Super Bynum

After Snyder tied up the ball game
at 67 with 2 minutes left to play,
Bynum treated everyone in the sta-
dium to a high-flying act that Tech
players and many fans have become
familiar with.

GT/Nebraska First Half

A collective gasp resonated from
the Yellow Jacket faithful as B.J.
Elder went down clutching his an-
kle early in the game. Nebraska’s star,
Kirk Snyder, had failed to convert
an alley-oop, and as he tried to re-
cover he lost his footing and fell
right onto Elder’s leg.

Elder was taken to the lock-
eroom for x-rays where it was
discovered that he had an ankle
sprain. With arguably the
deepest guard set
in the na-
tion, the Jack-
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Elite Eight Match-up

The Jackets were completely stacked
against Tech for their first Elite Eight
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Jackets knock off Jayhawks in regional final

By Ryan Peck
Senior Staff Writer

As the final seconds ticked off the clock last Sunday at the Edward Jones Dome in St. Louis, Tech point guard Jarrett Jack hoisted the ball victoriously into the air. By the time the ball landed into the hands of tearful Dawnette Hewitt, the wife of Coach Paul Hewitt, Kansas had been denied the chance to return to the Final Four, and Tech had secured its first berth since 1990.

“It’s only fitting that the clock expired with the ball in the hands of Jack. Tech’s spectacular sophomore guard claimed St. Louis Regional MVP honors after orchestrating a brilliant 29-point, nine-rebound, six-assist, and four-steal outing.

The 29 points were a career high, and Jack scored eight of Tech’s 13 points in overtime, as the Jackets ousted the Jayhawks by a score of 79-71 in front of a partisan Kansas crowd.

Elder, Tech’s leading scorer, was limited to just 12 minutes of playing time following an injury he suffered Friday in the regional semifinal.

Morgan, Stojanovska honored by NCAA

By Kimberly Rieck
Sports Editor

For the first time in the history of Tech’s men’s and women’s swimming and diving program, both teams have placed in the top 35 at the championships. The first NCAA All-American, Morgan earned All-American honors after he finished 15th in the 1500-meter freestyle, in his second trip to the men’s NCAA championships. Morgan traveled to Long Island, NY for the event.

“Sam’s now our third NCAA All-American. It bodes very well for our men’s program and the future of our men’s program,” Baron said.

Morgan finished in 18th place in the 1500-meter freestyle event at last year’s championships.

The first NCAA All-American for Tech was current graduate assistant coach and alumnus Shilo Aylon, who earned All-American honors three straight years. Aylon and Morgan train closely together, and last year competed against each other in the 1500-meter event at the championships.

Baron hopes that with Tech’s high national rankings and world-class aquatic facilities, the future of the men’s and women’s swimming program will continue this success.

Miami baseball game time moved

The baseball team will be playing at 1 p.m. Saturday instead of 7 p.m. due to a conflict with Tech’s appearance in the Final Four. Fans attending the baseball game at Russ Chandler Stadium are invited to stay afterwards to watch a broadcast of the basketball game on the video board, with concessions available for both games.

Softball falls to No. 5 Georgia

Tech fell by a score of 4-1 in a close game to rival Georgia. Play was delayed in the first game of the intended doubleheader, and the second was cancelled due to rain. There has been no date scheduled for a makeup. Tech will open up Atlantic Coast Conference play as they travel to Tallahassee, Fla., for a doubleheader with No. 4 Florida State (38-4).