Villanova rides buzzer-beater to national title

BY CHAD CONINE THE SPORTS XCHANGE

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HOUSTON — It might be April, but March Madness prevailed to the very last second of the NCAA NCAA MEN'S **TOURNEY** Tourna-

Villanova junior guard Kris Jenkins hit a buzzerbeating 3-pointer to lift the Wildcats to a thrilling 77-74 victory over North Carolina in the national championship game Monday night at NRG Stadium.

Jenkins, along with Villanova guards Phil Booth and Ryan Arcidiacono, danced in the spotlight and became stars to shine with Rollie Massimino and Rocky Balboa in the Philadelphia galaxy.

Booth filled up the basket in the second half, finishing with 20 points. Even so, the Wildcats were facing the prospect of overtime with 4.7 seconds left until Arcidiacono raced the ball 70 feet and dished to Jenkins for one last chance to win it.

"We knew what play we were going to at the end of the game, because we work on it every single day in practice," Arcidiacono said. 'I wanted to be aggressive. If I could get a shot, I was going to shoot it. But I heard feeling the confetti fall, but lanova squad that won the

someone screaming in the back of my head. It was Kris. I just gave it to him, and he let it go with confidence.

North Carolina coach Roy Williams said he knew by Jenkins' follow through on the last shot that it was probably going in the basket.
"The difference between

winning and losing in college basketball is so small," Williams said. "The difference in your feelings is so large. But that's the NCAA Tournament. That's college basketball.'

Moments earlier, North Carolina guard Marcus Paige hit a leaning 3-pointer from the right sideline to tie it at 74.

Arcidiacono scored 16, Jenkins had 14, and Josh Hart added 12 points and eight rebounds for Villanova (35-5).

Arcidiacono, who hit a combined 11 of 15 shots from the floor in the last two games, was selected the Final Four's Most Outstanding Player.

Paige compiled 21 points, six assists and five rebounds. Joel Berry added 20 for North Carolina (33-7), and Brice Johnson had 14 points and eight boards.

"You know, just that feeling of walking off the court,



Villanova Wildcats guard Ryan Arcidiacono celebrates after cutting down the net after defeating the North Carolina Tar Heels in the championship game of the NCAA Men's Final Four at NRG Stadium on Monday night. Villanova won 77-74.

it's not for you," Berry said. "It's a horrible feeling."

Jenkins' heroics meant that Villanova joined Massimino's 1985 Wildcats in grasping the school's second national championship. Massimino was in attendance Monday, but the team he saw was more dominant than the Cinderella eighth-seeded Vil-

tournament 31 years ago.

These Wildcats crushed opponents by an average of 24 points per game to get to the final, then asserted control over North Carolina in the second half before a final charge by the Tar Heels. North Carolina erased a 10point deficit in the last five minutes to set up Paige's

"The plays they made down the stretch, when they got down at the end, they executed everything perfect-Villanova coach Jay Wright said. "(Villanova forward) Daniel Ochefu goes for that steal, and Marcus Paige has the intelligence to not go by him and shoot a 2, to pull up and hit a 3. That was just great college basketball. Two great teams in a national championship

Villanova took its first lead of the second half after an 8-1 surge that erased a five-point Tar Heels edge. Booth went into the lane to hit a shot that put Villanova ahead 46-44 with 13:28 left.

Paige went down the baseline for a basket that broke a three-minute field-goal drought and tied it at 46.

Villanova, however, kept the momentum and used a 7-0 run to lead 53-46 when Arcidiacono hit a jumper with 9:53 left.

Berry had 15 first-half points, and both he and Justin Jackson were 3-for-3 from beyond the arc as the Tar Heels took a 39-34 lead into halftime.

North Carolina scored 50 points in the paint in its semifinal win over Syracuse, but the Tar Heels did their damage from 3-point range in the first half against Villanova.

Jackson and Berry led the way as North Carolina hit seven of nine from beyond the arc in the first 20 min-

The Tar Heels and Wildcats punched and countered for the entirety of the first half, which featured eight lead changes and six ties.

Greenlaw leads Thomas by Johnson State | UConn rolls by

tha Greenlaw scored five goals and had two assists to

COLLEGE Thomas **ROUNDUP** College Terriers to a

14-4 women's lacrosse victory over the Johnson State (Vermont) Spartans Tuesday at Smith Field.

Erin Nelligan added four goals and an assist while Sophia LaVallee chipped in tine, Kevin Seiler scored four with three goals and three

WATERVILLE — Saman- assists for Thomas (2-5). Hai- Maine Maritime Academy. ley Mullen and Mary Turmel each added a goal. Brittany Fox made two saves and Erwin each added three Tori Grey had three.

Nichole Weeks paced Johnson State (0-5) with three goals and Kaitlin Boucher finished with 11 saves.

Men's Lacrosse Colby 27, MMA 3

At Ritchie Field in Casgoals to help Colby roll by ville, Colby Blondin and

Harrison Alpaugh, Thomas Brewster and William goals for Colby (3-7). Dylan Rothenberg had one save and C.J. Layton had two.

Dean Samuelson scored two goals for MMA (2-6) and Chase Whittemore had one. Cody Schell made 23 saves.

Thomas 8, Johnson St. 5 At Smith Field in Water-

Parker Chute each recorded three goals and an assist to propel the Terriers by Johnson State (Vermont) for their first win of the season.

Bryan Ferris and Zac Crimmin each chipped in with a goal and an assist for Thomas (0-5). Connor Lamberton finished with 15

Mason Phillips sparked Johnson State (0-5) with two goals and Jay Palmisano

Hurricanes hurt Bruins' playoff hopes with win

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

BOSTON — The frustrated TD Garden crowd started a chant of "We Want Playoffs" early in the third period of Tuesday night's game.

Their Bruins, threatening to miss the playoffs for the second straight season, were trailing Carolina 1-0 in a game important only to Bos-

The chant produced almost instant results, with Loui Eriksson tying the game, but the Hurricanes still managed to pull out a 2-1 victory in a shootout.

Rookie defenseman Noah Hanifin, a local product who played at Boston College, beat Tuukka Rask with the only goal of a five-round shootout to give the Hurricanes the win, raising their record over the last 16 games to 7-3-6.

With the point, the Bruins pulled into a tie with the idle Detroit Red Wings for third place in the Atlantic Division, but the Red Wings, who visit Boston on Thursday night, have a game in hand. The Bruins also pulled even with the idle Philadelphia Flyers in the chase for the second wild card, but the Flyers, who



ADAM HUNGER I USA TODAY

Tampa Bay Lightning goalie Andrei Vasilevskiy makes a save during the second period against the New York Rangers at Madison Square Garden on Tuesday night. The Rangers won 3-2.

host Detroit on Wednesday, Dec. 8 to give the 'Canes a 1-0 have two games in hand on Boston, which hosts the Ottawa Senators in Saturday's regular season finale.

Veteran goaltender Cam Ward, just 14-35 with a .636 save percentage all-time in shootouts, was a perfect 5-for-5 in the shootout and made 35 saves in the 65 minutes of regulation and overtime.

Defenseman Jaccob Slavin

lead late in the first period.

Rask, falling to 20-25 lifetime in shootouts, made 27 saves in the game.

Carolina, playing its ninth overtime period in its last 15 games, was playing its first game since being eliminated from the playoffs.

Bruins defenseman and captain Zdeno Chara saved the regulation tie with 1:40 scored his first goal since remaining. Rask made a save

on Brett Pesce but the puck trickled through and was lying near the goal line when Chara got to it ahead of Carolina's Elias Lindholm and cleared the puck out of dan-

Rask had made a huge save on Jeff Skinner with 11:39 left

Rask, who came in with an .836 save percentage over his last three outings, made some excellent saves to keep the game scoreless but should have had the shot that went in — Slavin flipping a puck from the left point that found its way in with 1:06 left in the first period.

The Bruins came out better in the second but still couldn't get the puck past Ward, who came in just 13-15-3 against Boston in his career. Carolina re-captured its territorial edge in the second

half of the period. Eriksson, guilty of four penalties for eight minutes on the year, took two in the second period, his second coming with 28.9 seconds left in the period, leaving Carolina on the power play heading into the third — a period the Bruins desperately needed to

Syracuse for title

BY JEFF WASHBURN THE SPORTS XCHANGE

INDIANAPOLIS — Connecticut wasn't quite perfect, but the Huskies were

good enough to cap a per-**NCAA** fect 38-0 sea-**WOMEN'S** son and cap-**TOURNEY** ture a fourth consecutive

NCAA women's basketball Tuesday championship

National Player of the Year Breanna Stewart had 24 points, 10 rebounds and six assists in UConn's 82-51 victory over Syracuse.

Morgan Tuck added 19 points, seven rebounds and five assists for the Huskies.

The Huskies improved to 11-0 in national championship games and 109-17 alltime in NCAA Tournament competition. Coach Geno Auriemma pulled his starters with 1:46 remaining and UConn leading 80-51.

The Huskies scored the third quarter's first eight points to extend their lead to 58-23, but Syracuse countered with a 20-2 run to pull within 60-43. UConn freshman Napheesa Collier scored the period's final four points for a 64-43 cushion.

A Stewart 3-pointer with 5:59 remaining pushed the Huskies' advantage to 71-47. Cornelia Fondren came

off the bench to lead Syracuse (30-8) with 16 points. The Huskies shot 51.9 per-

cent (28-for-54) from the floor while limiting the Orange to 35.5 percent shooting (22-for-62). Connecticut cruised to a

50-23 halftime lead.

Stewart scored 14 firsthalf points, and Tuck and Moriah Jefferson had 11 apiece as the Huskies were well on their way to capping a perfect 38-0 season.

A layup by Kia Nurse gave UConn a 38-15 lead with 5:49 remaining in the opening half, prompting a Syracuse timeout. At that point, the Orange were 5-for-20 from the field, and the Huskies enjoyed a 21-7 rebounding advantage.

Fondren came off the bench for Syracuse to score a team-best six first-half points. The Orange made only nine of 30 opening-half shots (30 percent) and were guilty of eight turnovers, leading to 14 UConn points.

The Huskies were gunning for their 75th consecutive overall victory and their 24th consecutive Tournament triumph.

Connecticut shot 51.6 percent in the first half (16-for-31) and was 13-for-16 from the free throw line.

UConn led 28-13 through one quarter, getting 10 from Stewart and seven from Jefferson, adding an almost unheard of 18 first-quarter rebounds, 13 more than Syracuse, which shot only 25 percent (4-for-16) in the opening period.

With consecutive 3-pointers from Stewart and Jefferson, the Huskies raced to a 13-4 lead.

NOTES: UConn entered the national championship game having won its first five tournament games by an average of 39.6 points. ... The Huskies advanced with a record-setting 80-51 semifinal victory against Oregon State.

Woodside

Continued from Page B5

free pool time. There's no free pool time, it's a true basketball education," he

Woodside's summer work with PGC will end in Au-

"The next step after that isn't fully defined yet," said Woodside, a 2004 Calais graduate. "I'm still working on that next step, but it's one of those things where I knew I needed to make a career transition to be doing what I really want to do.

"My ultimate goal is to be involved in basketball as a full-time career in some way, so we'll see what the universe provides for me in that situation," he said.

Woodside began coaching at age 18 at the travel team and AAU levels while an undergraduate at Eastern Connecticut State University.

After completing his master's studies at the University of Connecticut in 2011, he returned Down East to work at Washington County Community College. He began coaching basketball again the following spring and in 2014 became junior varsity coach and varsity assistant under former Calais head coach Ed Leeman.

Woodside ascended to the varsity a post a year later after Leeman resigned to accept a job promotion with the Jobs For Maine Graduates program and guided a year," he said.

veteran Blue Devils squad to a 20-2 record and the Class C state title, a run capped off by a 57-43 win over Dirigo of Dixfield in the state final.

"Having the opportunity to coach that team at my alma mater was a dream come true," said Woodside. "Obviously I couldn't have asked for a better first year when it comes to winning and losing. You can't do better than win a state championship.

A much younger Calais squad finished 6-12 last winter, missing the final Class C North playoff berth by 0.1234 Heal points. "I probably learned more

about myself coaching this past year when we weren't able to make the playoffs than I did the previous

Woodside implemented what he described as a "leadership class" with his basketball players last winter, an effort that influenced his decision to make an even greater commitment to the "We took an hour each

week and did some leadership development, talking about things such as communication, overcoming adversity, how to properly use social media, and having empathy for others," he said. "We want our athletes to be leaders, but if you never put anything into it how can you expect that to happen?

Woodside hasn't defined a specific job goal, leaving that to the connections he makes and the opportunities that arise.

easier to grip.

Brady and the team have repeatedly denied wrongdoing, contending that staff had not been instructed to inflate balls to less than the standard 12.5 pounds per square inch of pressure

Goodell: Playoffs likely to expand

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

NFL commissioner Roger Goodell kicked open the door on renewed discussions for playoff expansion in a town hall meeting with season ticket holders in Jacksonville.

Goodell in recent years shared considerations to expand the regular season to 18 games and also stretching the playoff field by at least two teams.

Even Goodell said he understands coaches and players who don't want to dilute the product. With additional playoff spots available, the chances to enter the final weeks of the regular season having most or all postseason positions determined would increase. That means a possible ratings hit with teams locked into a playoff

spot resting stars. Goodell told Jaguars' season ticket holders the discussion and decision will be

'And the reason I say that is it works so well right now. We have 12 teams that quali-

fy for the playoffs and what it does is it's not just the number of teams in the playoffs, it's what it does to our regular season," he said. "I think that's what makes the NFL great is

every game means That much. game means a great deal. You don't ever want to lose that. You don't want to lose the fact



that every regular-season game is important. And only having 12 teams qualify, which is the smallest of any of the professional leagues by far, that's a good thing for

"(It) likely will happen at some point, but we want to be really cautious because we really like the balance we have with the importance of the regular season and the postseason and you don't want to mess with that balance. You have to be really careful and cau-

Patriots

Continued from Page B5

A New York federal court judge blocked that suspension days before the season's start; the league since has

appealed that decision contending that Goodell acted within his rights as league commissioner.

An NFL spokesman did not immediately respond to a request for comment on

port on the allegations commissioned by the NFL found that it was "more probable than not" that Brady, now 38, had been "generally aware" that two low-level Patriots employees had conspired to take pressure out of foot-A 243-page, \$2.5 million reballs, which can make them

tough. mandated by NFL rules.