

Syracuse Orange routs California Golden Bears, 95-73, at Garden

BY [Dick Weiss](#)
DAILY NEWS SPORTS WRITER

Thursday, November 19th 2009, 11:23 PM



Mclsaac/GettyMookie Jones and the Syracuse Orange have a layup against Cal, routing the Golden Bears 95-73.

Syracuse coach [Jim Boeheim](#) did not have much of a book on [Wesley Johnson](#) when the 6-7 junior forward began making inquiries about transferring from [Iowa State](#)

two years ago.

But he is quickly discovering how valuable Johnson can be for this [Big East](#) team that has reloaded more quickly than expected after losing all three of its perimeter starters - [Jonny Flynn](#), [Paul Harris](#) and [Eric Devendorf](#) - from last year's [NCAA Sweet 16](#) team.

Johnson looked very comfortable in his debut at the Garden Thursday night, scoring 17 points on 7-of-12 shooting, grabbing 11 rebounds and blocking six shots in 32 minutes as the new look Orange (3-0) cruised by Cal, 95-73, in the opener of the 2K Classic semifinals. "It was everything I thought it would be -very loud, very intense," Johnson said. "This is where it's at. Everybody's yelling and screaming. My family's in the crowd."

Junior point guard [Scoop Jardine](#), who stepped in when Flynn declared early for the NBA draft, led the Orange with a career-high 22 points, while 6-9 center [Arinze Onuaku](#) added 12 for Syracuse, which shot 57.1%. Guard Jerome Randle had 25 for the [Golden Bears](#) (2-1), who were playing without starting forward [Theo Robertson](#), who has a right foot injury.

But this game was a showcase for Johnson, who seems destined to be one of Syracuse's all-time greats if he continues on this road. "He's not really good. He's really good," Boeheim said. "And you only saw about 50% of what he's capable of doing."

Johnson began looking elsewhere after he had a falling-out with Iowa State coach [Greg McDermott](#). Johnson felt McDermott and his staff disregarded his complaints about an ankle injury that bothered him throughout his sophomore season.

"I had heard good things about Wesley, but I didn't know how good he was. I never actually saw him play until he was here last fall. I watched him in a two-hour workout and right there it was pretty clear he was a special player. It took me about a minute to recognize that. I took me 30 seconds with [Carmelo Anthony](#) and about a minute with Wesley."

UNC Tar Heels hold on to beat Ohio State Buckeyes, 77-73

BY [Sean Brennan](#)

DAILY NEWS SPORTS WRITER

Friday, November 20th 2009, 4:00 AM

Maybe there was some mild surprise when [North Carolina](#) was chosen as the class of the [ACC](#) again this season. Surprising, perhaps, because the defending national champion [Tar Heels](#) had seen four of their starters from last season's 34-4 title team leave for the [NBA](#), taking with them more than 75% of UNC's scoring and almost 60% of its rebounding from a year ago.

With victories over lightweights Florida International, [North Carolina Central](#) and [Valparaiso](#) coming into last night's [2K Sports Classic](#) semifinal against No. 15 [Ohio State](#), even Heels head [coach Roy Williams](#) had cautioned that No. 6 Carolina had yet to be tested and perhaps its early-season status was just a bit too lofty for his liking.

Williams was right. This UNC team is not quite the finished product it may be later in the season. But the Heels were good enough last night to survive despite coughing up almost all of a 19-point second-half lead and [Larry Drew](#) missing three straight free throws inside the final minute before he nailed a pair with 11.3 seconds to play as Carolina held on for a 77-73 victory over the upset-minded [Buckeyes](#) before 15,635 at the Garden.

North Carolina (4-0) will face [Syracuse](#) (3-0) in tonight's championship game of the tournament that benefits Coaches vs. Cancer.

"Ohio State is a great team with great three-point shooters," Drew said. "They were getting open looks there down the stretch and they just kept knocking them down."

The Tar Heels led, 53-34, after [Justin Watts](#) drilled a three-pointer with 11:32 to play and seemed in complete control. But OSU began to chip away, finally pulling within 71-63 on a [William Buford](#) three-ball with 1:17.

UNC was still leading, 73-65, with 49.7 seconds to play when Drew suddenly went cold at the free throw line. He missed three straight attempts, an opportunity the Buckeyes used to pull within 74-70 with 22.7 to play.

And with Drew at the line again with a chance to close things out with 20.9 seconds left, he made just one of two, giving OSU another chance to creep closer, which it did when [Jon Diebler](#) nailed a three with 11.3 seconds to play to pull OSU within 75-73.

But Drew was handed one final opportunity to seal the deal for the Heels. And when he sank a pair of free throws with 11 seconds to play, UNC had survived the Buckeyes' frantic comeback.

"I wanted the ball in my hands at the end," said Drew, who finished with 11 points. "I missed three free throws in the clutch and I needed a chance to redeem myself. I knew the next time I went to the line I would knock them down."