

## Syracuse peels away at North Carolina to win Coaches vs. Cancer tournament championship

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North Carolina, [California](#) and [Ohio State](#) all arrived in [New York](#) for the 2K Classic with lofty national rankings. Then there was [Syracuse](#), without a number next to its name.

Yes, one of these teams was not like the others.

It was better.

The Orange capped an overpowering two days at the Garden Friday night by dominating No. 6 [North Carolina](#), 87-71, before 15,552 in the championship game of the tournament to benefit Coaches vs. Cancer.

Pair this with Thursday night's 22-point semifinal win over 13th-ranked Cal and it's clear Syracuse is going to be getting a number - and a good one - when the new rankings come out Monday.

Syracuse (4-0) actually trailed by two points at halftime but was in full blitz mode coming out of the break. The Orange scored 22 of the first 23 points of the second half to go up by 59-40 on [Scoop Jardine](#)'s fast-break layup with 12:14 to play. The [Tar Heels](#) (4-1) mounted a furious comeback but got no closer than 68-60 with 7:02 left.

Earlier, No. 15 Ohio State defeated No. 13 California, 76-70, in the third-place game.

The two days were a showcase for [Wesley Johnson](#), the 6-7 junior transfer from [Iowa State](#). He followed Thursday night's 17-point, 11-rebound semifinal performance with 25 points and eight rebounds against UNC to earn tournament MVP honors.

It was just another magical night at the Garden for Syracuse, which eight months ago outlasted [Connecticut](#) in a classic, six-overtime [Big East](#) Tournament quarterfinal. Johnson got a briefing on what to expect at MSG from none other than [Gerry McNamara](#), who as Syracuse point guard from 2003-06 penned a few spectacular stories at the World's Most Famous Arena.

"He said, 'When the lights come on you're going to (feel) it,'" Johnson said. "After that the shots started falling."

Syracuse made 54% of its shots and was 9-for-21 on 3-pointers. The 'Cuse owned the boards by a 37-23 margin. And coach [Jim Boeheim](#)'s vaunted 2-3 zone defense held the Tar Heels to 38% shooting and just four 3-pointers and forced 19 turnovers.

"Their zone has taken the place of what the Temple zone (was) when [John Chaney](#) was there," Carolina coach [Roy Williams](#) said. "It's the best zone in college basketball."

Center [Arinze Onuaku](#) had 15 points - 13 in the second half - and [Andy Rautins](#) and [Brandon Triche](#) added 11 points apiece for the Orange. [Ed Davis](#) had 16 points and 10 rebounds for UNC, [Marcus Ginyard](#) scored 15 and [Deon Thompson](#) 11.

"They beat the dickens out of us," Williams said. "It's been a long time since someone beat our team that badly."