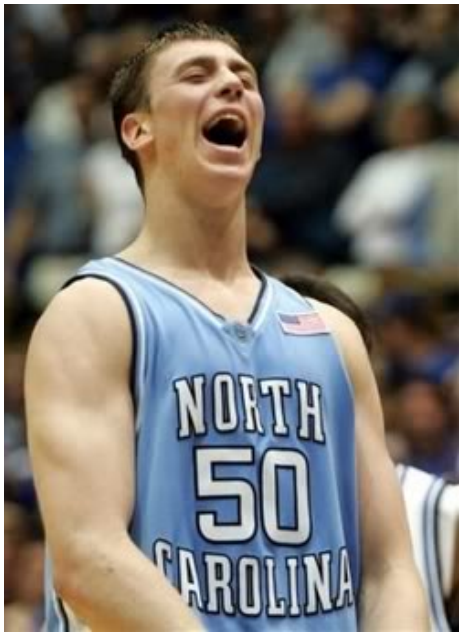
The Buckeyes travel to Chapel Hill tonight for a 9 PM contest versus North Carolina in a game that will be seen on ESPN as part of the ACC/Big Ten Challenge. In addition to matching the #1 and #6 rated teams in the country in the USA Today/Coaches Poll, the game also matches the two top freshman classes in the nation. Absolute must see TV tonight my friends. GO BUCKS!



The Buckeye hoops season kicks into high gear tonight, as the men of the scarlet and gray travel to Chapel Hill for a 9 PM tilt with the North Carolina Tarheels.

In addition to matching the #1 and #6 ranked teams in the USA Today/Coaches Poll, the game also features the two top incoming freshman classes in the country. Combined, the two schools feature eight of the top eighteen ranked freshman in the country, as decided by the recruiting website www.Rivals.com .

The game is an early season test for two of the most talented teams in the country. Two teams expected to be legitimate title contenders this season despite their relative youth and inexperience. But that's where the similarities end. Ohio State and North Carolina play two different brands of basketball. And this should be an incredibly exciting contest tonight.

In addition to their lethal freshman class, the Tar Heels also return six of their seven leading scores from a season ago. Carolina is led by superstar sophomore center Tyler Hansbrough (pictured), who is undoubtedly one of the best big men in the country. Hansbrough is averaging 20.6 points and 8.8 rebounds per night, and is almost impossible for college defenders to stop once he has the ball and has position in the paint. He's joined in the frontcourt by freshman phenom Brandan Wright, a 6'9 menacing power forward that has averaged 16.6 points and 7.4 rebounds in his first five college basketball games. The duo has been downright dominant down low thus far, and the Tar Heels have enjoyed huge advantages in rebounds and free throw attempts over their early season opponents as a result.

Still without Greg Oden, Carolina will enjoy a significant size advantage over the Buckeyes this

evening. Thad Matta's troops have been playing a fast paced brand of basketball reliant on their defense, ball movement, and ability to score in transition. The Bucks have been led by point guards Jamar Butler and Mike Conley Jr (both of whom start and play heavy minutes) as well as swingmen Daequan Cook and Ron Lewis. But the most important guys tonight for Matta will be big men Matt Terwilliger and Othella Hunter, both of whom will be relied upon heavily as the Buckeyes try and pack in defensively on Hansbrough and Wright.

Both teams love to run, and that style could be another Carolina advantage this evening as they play twelve men regularly, with nine guys getting double digit minutes per game. Without Oden, Matta has been playing an eight man rotation. Conley, Butler, and Lewis start at the guard spots, with Hunter and freshman David Lighty down low. Cook is the super sixth man off the bench, and Terwilliger and senior Ivan Harris provide depth up front. Carolina starts Hansbrough, Wright, and senior Reyshawn Terry in the frontcourt, and have a dynamic freshman backcourt with Tywon Lawson at the point and Wayne Ellington at the off-guard spot.

At 6-0, and now atop the coaches poll, this is the first test for the Buckeyes, who have cruised through an easy early season schedule. Things don't get any easier for them, as the schedule sees them playing at defending champion Florida and also at Cincinnati before Big Ten play heats up. North Carolina is 4-1 on the season. They cruised through their first three contests against inferior competition, then were upset 82-74 in the semifinals of the Pre-season NIT by a rebuilding and unranked Gonzaga squad. The Tar Heels rallied back in the consolation game to knock off #22 ranked Tennessee by a score of 101-87.

Should be a fun one tonight, live from the Dean Dome. Go Bucks!