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Mason's antics nearly cost knicks a win

By Barry Rubinstein Newhouse News Service

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. Just when Pat Riley thought he no longer had to gnashhis teeth at the mention of Anthony Mason's name ...

Just when Riley thought he no longer had to seethe at the sight of Mason's latest haircut ...

Just when Riley was putting scraped blackboards out of his mind upon hearing Mason's gravelly voice ...

It all happened again last night in the Palace of Auburn

But this time, Riley didn't have to tell Mason to leave the floor and head to the dressing room. Referee Ron Olesiak did it for him.

Mason was ejected for absorbing back-to-back technical fouls early in the fourth quarter, and the two resulting free

Pistons fail to capitalize on the Motor City Mouth throws proved to be part of an

eight-point run which helped give the downtrodden Detroit Pistons a life they might never have had if not for Mason's mo-

But in the end, that life was snuffed out as the Knicks showed strong resolve down the stretch. And clearly, the specter of Michael Jordan's domination the night before had dissipated bounce back with a 107-97 tri-

umph over the Pistons. Patrick Ewing led the way with 28 points, and John Starks had 19; the Pistons got 32 points from Allan Houston and 26 from Grant Hill.

Thus the Knicks snapped their modest two-game losing streak and improved their record to 45-24. They won for the

19th time in 29 games, 25th in 36 and 33rd in 45. tosses.

The Pistons fell to 25-44, losing for the ninth time in 11 games.

toring mouth. Mason's muttering came at a time the Pistons were showing some life. A nine-point Knicks lead was cut to seven by a Lindsey Hunter drive and then to five on a Houston jumper.

enough to allow the Knicks to Charles Smith was whistled for his fifth foul. And while Grant Hill lined up for a pair of free throws, referee Ron Olesiak whistled the jaw-flapping Mason for a technical foul.

But Mason did not quiet down and seconds later Olesiak called another technical foul on Mason, ejecting him.

The result was a pair of suc- row. cessful free throws by Houston,

sandwiched in between Hill's

And just like that, the Knicks' advantage was sliced to 84-83 with 9:19 to play.

The Knicks then scratched and clawed and, in the process, scored nine of 13 points on the way to a 97-90 advantage. Ewing and Harper scored baskets before Hill cut the Knicks' tee-Twenty seconds later, tering edge to 92-90. But Hubert Davis then gave the Knicks breathing room with five consecutive points, including a 3pointer with 3:19 remaining.

Houston then sank a 3-pointer to cut it to 97-93 with 3:00 left but the Knicks, showing a killer instinct that has been invisible so often this season, finished the Pistons with seven points in a

And with that, it probably

became safe to mention Mason's name within earshot of Riley once again.

The Knicks, who held a 10point lead at the half, began to sputter toward the latter stages of the third quarter, as Detroit closed within five, 78-73, with 1:52 left in the quarter. That came about thanks in part to a pair of 3-pointers by Joe Du-

But as the Pistons were living by the sword, so, too, did they feel the pain, as Starks buried a 3-pointer of his own with 42.2 seconds left in the third, and that enabled the Knicks to carry an 81-73 edge into the final quarter.

Without a Gary Payton, a Scottie Pippen or heaven forbid a Jordan to contend with, the Knicks actually found themselves with a comfortable lead in the first half, thanks to a 20-5 second-quarter run that put them out in front, 42-28.

But perhaps such a stretch of success wasn't what it seemed to be cracked up to be. Certainly, the Knicks had their eyes on Hill; after all, it was he who lit them up to a toasty glow in the teams' last meeting, a Detroit victory back on Valentine's Day. And Hill contributed his share of damage in the first half as he netted 16 points on 5-of-11 shoot-

But one player the Knicks weren't watching that closely hurt them just as much as Hill -Houston, who also came through with 16 first-half points, as he went 7-for-11 from the field.

While Hill and Houston had 32 points between them through the opening 24 minutes, the rest

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Devils Ottawa

By Rich Chere Newhouse News Service

OTTAWA - With a nagging groin injury, Stephane Richer is never really certain when he will be in the Devils lineup until minutes before game time. Each night, his teammates hold their collective breath.

Richer, who did not take part in the team's morning skate, rifled a shot past Ottawa goaltender Don Beaupre early in the third period and the Devils came from behind to edge the lowly Senators, 4-2, last night in the Ottawa Civic Centre.

Bobby Carpenter was instrumental in two of the scores, scoring the 300th goal of his NHL career in the first period and setting up Richer's gamewinner.

The Devils, 2-1-1 on their current road trip, snapped a 2-2 tie at 3:37 of the third period. Carpenter threw a cross-ice pass from the neutral zone, sending Richer in on left wing. The hard-shooting forward blasted a shot from high in the left circle that beat Beaupre on his stick side. It was Richer's 17th goal of the season and his fifth game-winner.

"I have to be careful," Richer said of his game-to-game status. "Look at Randy (McKay). He's in the same situation. He hurt himself by coming back too soon. We have three games in four nights, which is tough. But I have to try to play because we have to win and now Claude (Lemieux) is out."



Associated Press photo

Devils' Shawn Chambers gets off a shot against Senators' goalie Don Beaupre during the first period last night.

Carpenter's pass was nearly offside on the play that resulted in Richer's goal.

"Seriously, I thought it was offside," said Richer. "It happened so fast. You don't stop to 7.4 seconds left in the game. hear a whistle, but I didn't hear a whistle. It was close."

Bill Guerin scored his ninth goal of the season at 16:50, two seconds after a Devils power play expired.

"We'll count that as a power play goal," said Devils' coach Jacques Lemaire. "He (Chris Dahlquist) wasn't back yet."

Devils' goalie Martin Bro-

deur nearly added a fifth goal after the Senators pulled goalie Beaupre. Brodeur fired the puck from the left side of his net, missing a goal by two feet with

"I practiced my golf swing this week, so I've got my slice going," said Brodeur.

Lemieux served the first game of a three-game suspension for sucker-punching Brett Lindros of the Islanders from the bench last Sunday.

Richer's goal came less than a minute after Mike Peluso bloodied Ottawa's Scott Levins

in a fight. Peluso, a former Senators forward, checked Norm Maciver into the boards. Levins made the mistake of sticking up for Maciver, only to be battered by Peluso's left hand. Levins left the ice bloodied between his left eye and temple.

The Senators, who blew a 2-1 lead in the final seconds of the second period, have lost five in a

Danton Cole, who skated on the Neal Broten-John MacLean line in place of suspended for-

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Virginia Tech tips Marquette for NIT crown

By Wayne Witkowski Journal staff writer

faced a weighty situation when he stepped to theline with just :00.7 and Virginia Tech down by a point.

The 6-6 junior forward, who dropped 42 pounds since preseason, made good on both, the second one after a Marquette timeout, as Virginia Tech scored a 65-64 overtime win for the NIT championship last night.

It was only the second NIT title ever won by Virginia Tech, the other one coming in 1973 over Notre Dame, also in overtime, by a 92-91 score.

"I knew it was on my shoulders and that if I miss, I'd get the blame and if I hit I'd be the 1 in overtime games this season. hero," said Smith.

Enter America's new hero

center stage.

Valuable Player award, but it wasn't just on the merits of his last-second contribution. He scored 24 points and it marked the 11th time this season that Smith either led Virginia Tech (25-10) in scoring or shared it. A 15.8 ppg scorer coming into the game, Smith tied his season high with 10 free throws made out of 12 trips to the line. He had a 66.5 percent success rate com-

"I looked up at the clock and saw it running down so I figured the best thing to do was to take it to the hole," said Smith.

It was poetic justice for Smith after a last-second shot that would have given the Ho-

kies a big late-season win over Virignia rimmed out.

Smith's heroics, which came NEW YORK - Shawn Smith off a hack of his elbow by Faisal Abraham, came after Anthony Pieper, held to nine points after scoring 31 in Monday's semifinals, hit a driving layup with :18.3 left in overtime. Pieper had nearly won the game in regulation when his 40-foot heave at the buzzer bounded off the front of the rim and away.

Aaron Hutchins made the first of two free throws for Marquette (21-12) and missed the second and neither team scored over the final :33.4 in regulation as Virginia Tech went on to its third overtime win in four situations. Marquette, which won one NIT title previously in 1970, is 1-

"On that final play, we were trying to get the ball on a curl off the backside and stick it in-In fact, Smith got the Most side to get the foul," said Virginia Tech coach Bill Foster. "We've gotten good shots that haven't gone down so we said that if the game got tight this time, let's do something different instead of settling for a perimeter jumper."

> In fact, Virginia Tech did a lot of its damage inside, going 3-foron three-point shots. Marquette was 8-for-24 beyond the

> Shawn Good scored 14 points and the other five Virginia Tech players who got in balanced their scoring.

> Smith was able to power his way into the paint at the end

> > See VIRGINIA - Page 34

NCAA's biggest worry is hoop tournament gambling scandal

By Steve Wilstein Associated Press Writer

Lee Joseph Pitts is one of college basketball's worst nightmares, a sleazy, greedy, clever convict who ensnared athletes with sex, booze, drugs - whatever it took to get them to shave points or fix games for the gamblers he served.

He and mob "wise guys" like Henry Hill of the Lucchese crime family and Michael Franzese of the Colombo family are the reason why the NCAA is scared that its multibillion-dollar tournament leading to the Final Four someday could be irreparably tainted by scandal.

Only a few point-shaving in the past 20 years, yet NCAA investigators believe that many other games have been fixed all over the country.

"Oh sure, that's a reasonable statement," said Dirk L. Taitt, the NCAA's chief enforcement representative. "That's what's so insidious about it. You look at

Panel will look into propriety of publishing college point spreads

the tape of games and the fix can be on and it's hard sometimes to expose it. You or other authorities know a fix was made but it can't be proven.

"Some of these kids are so naive and they get caught in situations they can't control."

quiet to protect the young athletes he trapped in compromising sexual situations, but he is appearing in a videotape made by the FBI and major sports leagues as a warning to athletes.

schemes have been publicized me," Pitts said on the tape, its worries about the impact of cothe Correctional Institute in games when it sought earlier Ohio. "He says, 'Here's a list of this season to ban from the Figot to be able to find that vantage point, and you can't be

afraid to use it."

Pitts, convicted in 1992 in the rape of a male college athlete, had the private telephone numbers of more than 100 collegiate and professional athletes when he was arrested. Charges of kidnapping four athletes and Pitts' story has been kept providing them with drugs were dropped in a plea bargain, and he never revealed the names of the gamblers paying him or whether they succeeded in fixing games.

The NCAA basketball tour-"One of my bosses came to nament committee expressed which was shot in the Chilli- widespread gambling on college people. This is the set of games nal Four sports writers from that they're getting ready to newspapers that publish point play. These are the games that spreads. After the media cited we need the advantage. We've First Amendment concerns, the

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Journal photo by Don McCoy

Peahens sweep

St. Peter's shortstop Betty Franko forces out St. John's Madeline Sandoval at second base, but can't complete the double play yesterday during the first game of the Peahens' 3-1, 6-1 doubleheader sweep. (See Story on Page 31.)

Zampella 2nd team all-state NEWARK (AP) - Angela Zampella, Hudson County's top player by far, has earned state recognition with a second-team berth on the Associated Press All State girls basketball team. Meanwhile, Erica Gomez of St. John Vianney, Demya Walker of Rancocas Valley and LySchale Jones of Our Lady of Good Counsel were selected to the first team for the second straight year.

Joining the trio are Merri Jones of Middle Township and Jen Hutchinson of Notre Dame, the lone junior selected by New Jersey sports writers who covered girls basketball this sea-

A 5-foot, 6-inch junior, Zampella was the Blue Devils' cocaptain and a do-everything player. In addition to a 22.1 scoring average, she had 5.7 rebounds and 7.7 assists per game.

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Betting scandal NCAA's concern

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committee backed away from its threat.

But gambling and the propriety of printing point spreads sports betting is illegal everywhere except in Nevada - will
be discussed at the Final Four
by a panel of coaches, journalists and NCAA representatives
sponsored by the Arlington, Va.based Freedom Forum.

"If there were a scandal at the Final Four, that could virtually destroy the tournament. That's the ultimate fear," said Jim Haney, executive director of the National Association of Basketball Coaches.

"The unpredictability of sport is part of its appeal. If you look at what could turn people off, it's gambling. People like to gamble, but if you're betting on a team, you don't want to think that your team is throwing the game. We need to make sure that our coaches, our student athletes and our officials are all concerned about the same thing, and that is that the game remains pure or distant from the gambling aspect and maintains its integrity."

Bob Frederick, Kansas athletic director and head of the NCAA tournament selection committee, isn't worried so much about the small office pools of \$1 or \$5 a person during the Final Four as he is about the general increase in sports betting with the boom in legalized gambling. State lotteries and new casinos on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, Indian reservations and in more and more cities have created an atmosphere of acceptance of all kinds of wagers close to campuses.

"A lot of people don't see a problem with betting on games," Frederick said. "They think that it's innocent. But they don't realize that people have a really big stake in this, whether that be organized crime or simply big bettors, and they then want to gain an edge in this. That sense of innocence that's associated with it is really worrisome.

"Our university administrators should be just as concerned about this as they are about some of the other societal problems that we worry about on campus, like alcohol and drugs and sexually transmitted diseases."

Bookies operate on or near virtually every college campus, according to FBI agents, campus police and NCAA investigators. Student bookies can be found at most schools, and if the bets they take are large enough, they lay the action off to one or more outsiders.

With so much money at stake, the student bookies and gamblers often try to get information from athletes, who may be their friends, fraternity brothers or dormitory neighbors. Big-time bettors in Las Vegas or in organized crime frequently hire students to hang out at practice and report on inside information, authorities

Because of all that illegal activity, some editors are loath to print the point spreads and possibly encourage more gambling. The New York Times does not publish betting lines, and The Washington Post does not carry the lines on college games. The Los Angeles Times publishes college football point spreads once a week, "tucked away in a corner of the agate page," said sports editor Bill Dwyre. He said he wished his paper didn't run the lines at all because sports gambling is illegal outside Nevada and he believes there is a risk of a basketball fix.

Most newspapers, though, publish college football and basketball betting lines because readers want them.

"We received more than 50 irate calls before noon the last time we left out the line," said Tim Ellerbee, sports editor of the New Orleans Times-Pica-yune. "In New Orleans, people bet on humidity percentage."

At Northwestern, gambling led to the suspension of the basketball team's senior guard, Dion Lee, for six games this season, and football tailback Dennis Lundy for one game. Lee has said he bet only a few dollars with another student on college and pro football games and that

he was being singled out for excessive punishment for something that was relatively minor.

"What Dion has said publicly is not what happened," Northwestern athletic director Rick Taylor said. "We have talked to him and a lot of what he has said publicly is self-serving. Dion is in a stage of denial. And if you talk to him, he will tell you it was very innocent with a friend and not a lot of money. I think one can make the fair statement, based on our actions and the depth at which we looked at it, that it was not insignificant, it was not with a friend, and it was for a lot of money."

Lee, whose case is still part of a criminal investigation, declined to comment. He told Northwestern's sports information director that he wanted to put the gambling issue behind him

Interviews with students and athletes on other campuses, as well as with researchers and compulsive gambling counselors, revealed a growing epidemic of sports gambling that NCAA officials fear will spread among athletes.

"Kids are making book in high schools all over the country and they're doing it even more so in colleges," said clinical psychologist Durwood Jacobs, vice president of the National Council on Problem Gambling and author of the first review of teen-age gambling in America "We did a study of college kids in California in the early '90s that found 6 to 8 percent of them were probable pathological gamblers. It keeps going up."

Bookies operate at even the most upstanding schools, and gambling is rampant wherever students have access to both legal and illegal gambling.

At top-ranked UCLA, that means quick trips to Las Vegas or even quicker visits to local bookmakers. At Texas Tech, it means a cheap plane ride and short drive to Shreveport, La., or a stop at any of the 60 bookmakers doing business in Lubbock, Texas, a city of 200,000.

At Utah, host of the firstround of the Western Regionals, legal sports books are available just over the Nevada border, and illegal ones take bets within 10 minutes of the classroom. The same goes for Arizona and Arizona State. At Kansas, there's legal gambling nearby on the Missouri River, and at Connecticut students aren't far from gambling on an Indian reservation.

"Our proximity to Las Vegas will pretty much tell you about the extent of the problem of sports gambling at UCLA," said Lawrence Ma, sports editor of the Daily Bruin. "I've heard more than my share of stories about people taking off and going to Vegas and placing bets. During the Final Four, you could probably find about 80,000 little pools happening on campus."

Wherever there is heavy betting, gamblers try to find an edge. In the mid-1980s, the gamblers who came closest to gaining a huge edge were tied into the Colombo organized crime family through its self-described "capo" or captain, Michael Franzese

On the FBI videotape, Franzese told of his connections to former sports agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom, recently murdered, and indicating the lengths to which big-time gamblers will go to get the

"A player, to an organized crime figure, is like anything else, it's a commodity or a tool with which he can make money," said Franzese, who the FBI believes made \$300 million in various scams for the Colombo family.

"The plan was to go out and sign as many college athletes that we could," he said. "It would have been very advantageous for me to have a personal involvement. through Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom with a lot of these athletes. I would have looked to have gotten close with them and see if, No. 1, we could predict or determine the outcome of the game, if we can possibly influence the outcome of the game. At one point, (Walters) had the cream of the

Walters and Bloom once represented a dozen college football players who were considered first-round draft choices in the NFL. Franzese testified from jail against Walters and Bloom in their Chicago trial.

"If Norby was successful in pulling that operation off, you're talking about us representing well over 100 professional athletes," Franzese said. "I can't predict how many would have been willing to be influenced, or influence an outcome of a game in any way, but I'm sure that out of 100, we'd get a pretty good percentage."

All it took for Lucchese family associate Henry Hill to get an edge in betting on basketball was the cooperation of Rick Kuhn at Boston College during the 1978-79 season. Through friends, Kuhn had become involved with a Pittsburgh bookmaker, and together they came up with a plan to shave points. That plan was presented to Hill, who later wrote the best-selling biography, "Wise Guy," which became the movie, "Goodfellas"

"I was doing some drug business with this fellow, and he said, 'I'm able to fix some games now with Boston College, if you're interested," Hill said on the FBI videotape. He described how the bookmaker won Kuhn's cooperation by providing him with a car, girls, drugs and pocket money.

Kuhn then recruited the cooperation of team captain Jim Sweeney, but neither player had any idea who Hill was or what the Lucchesi family's involvement was.

"It wasn't a small scheme,"
Hill said. "It was a very, very
large scheme. We had to get
OKs from certain wise guys in
New York, who had to get an OK
from a wise guy from Boston to
even go up there."

Everyone agreed there was the potential to make big money.

"Absolutely," Hill said.
"Why get involved in it if you couldn't bet \$400,000, \$500,000, \$1 million on a game? I mean, that's the type of money we're talking about. There was a lot of money bet on one of the games, and they didn't perform properly, whether it was their fault or whether it wasn't. The people in New York didn't want to hear no ... excuses. They wanted to hurt one of the players. I mean, that's how serious it was."

Hill eventually offered to testify against Kuhn in a plea bargain. Kuhn later admitted his guilt and was sentenced to 10 years in prison. Hill has spent time in the federal witness protection program and in prison since the scandal.

Most major papers run point spreads

By Steve Wilstein AP Sports Writer

SEATTLE (AP) - Forty-eight of the 50 largest U.S. daily newspapers publish point spreads or betting odds for college and professional sports, according to a Freedom Forum sur-

The survey was released at the Final Four, prior to a panel discussion Friday on "Sports Betting and the Media," sponsored by the Arlington, Va.-based Freedom Forum and USA Today in cooperation with the NCAA and the Associated Press Sports Editors.

"The issue we face is whether the media follows or feeds the nation's betting frenzy," said Gene Policinski, USA Today managing editor for sports.

The practice of publishing odds or point spreads became an issue early this season when the NCAA men's basketball committee recommended that reporters whose publications carried betting lines on college sports be denied tournament coverage credentials. After a media outcry citing First Amendment rights, the recommendation was dropped. Sports betting is illegal in every state except Nevada.

The Freedom Forum survey showed that of the 50 largest dailies, only The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal, which in January added a sports page that appears once a week, do not run odds or betting lines for either college or professional sports.

"The key for newspapers is to decide whether printing point spreads is primarily for use by gamblers or whether it is of general interest to sports fans," said Paul Anger, president of the APSE and executive sports editor of the Miami Herald. "At the Herald, we run point spreads when we think there is general interest, but each newspaper should be free to make its own decision on what to run."

The Washington Post runs lines on pro football games, and occasionally on pro basketball games, but does not run odds on college sports, unless it is in the late stages of a tournament. For example, the Post included the line on the NCAA's round of 16 in a graphic March 23.

Sports editor George Solomon said the Post makes an exception for college sports in the final rounds of the NCAA tournament because knowing which team is favored, and by how much, is of interest to readers.

"Our guideline is that we do not look at college and professional sports in the same way," Solomon said. "We try to differentiate between the two. College sports are still so-called amateur sports."

The Los Angeles Times runs odds only on college and pro football. Sports editor Bill Dwyre said the odds are "hidden in the agate as far down as possible."

"I run no other odds," Dwyre said. "It's a moral decision. It is illegal to gamble in the state of California, and this is not viable information for anybody but a bettor. I do run football (odds), but I shouldn't rationalize that it has some information purpose besides betting, but I'm probably wrong."

The 46 other newspapers among the largest 50 answered "yes" when asked whether they run college and pro odds or point spreads on their sports pages on a regular basis. Three Seattle-area newspapers – the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, The Seattle Times and The News Tribune in Tacoma – also were questioned by Freedom Forum researchers, and each reported running both pro and college lines.

"The issue has free press implications," said Charles L. Overby, president and chief executive officer of The Freedom Forum, an organization dedicated to free press and free speech. "It's important that the level of discussion be elevated with coaches, editors and NCAA officials so that this issue can be fully aired."

in any way, but I'm sure that out of 100, we'd get a pretty good percentage." Bogota's Sullivan set All it took for Lucchese family associate Henry Hill to get an address in bettime as backets.

By Tom Luicci Newhouse News Service

SEATTLE - Pat Sullivan just can't escape being part of Final Four trivia.

In his last appearance in the event, back in 1993, he was the player who could have spared Michigan's Chris Webber the ignominious blunder of calling a timeout he didn't have had he simply made the second of two free throws.

His next appearance, which occurs Saturday when North Carolina faces Arkansas at the Kingdome, will make the Tar Heels' fifth-year senior only the fifth player in school history to be in three Final Fours.

Not bad for someone who was supposed to become a trivia question himself when he left Bogota for the big-time of North Carolina, despite a senior year that earned him first-team all-state honors: What ever happened to Pat Sullivan?

"To be among some of those players and to be one of only (five) guys to be in three Final Fours at this university is something that I'll always remember," said Sullivan.

The 6-8 Sullivan, though a career reserve with the Tar Heels, joins Joe Brown, Bill Bunting, Rusty Clark and Gerald Tuttle as the only Carolina players to appear in three Final Fours. The others were part of Tar Heel teams that went to the Final Four from 1967-69.

A bad back that caused him to redshirt last season allowed Sullivan a fifth year, and that has given him this opportunity. More than trivia, he can make history by becoming the first North Carolina player to own two championship rings should the Tar Heels win this year.

His first one was earned in '93 and Sullivan, indirectly, played a major role in it. Just by missing a free throw.

North Carolina was up by a point when Sullivan was fouled. He made the first, but not before Michigan players Jalen Rose and Rob Pelinka tried to rattle him a little.

"They were saying, 'This is for the national championship.

Are you ready?'

"recalled Sullivan. "I didn't say anything. I just stepped up there."

By missing his second opportunity, he set the stage for Webber to commit his famous mistake.

"I was hoping to knock in that second one to put us up three and maybe put the game out of reach," he said. "In a way, it turned out better that I didn't hit the last one because of what happened after that."

Sullivan's miss enabled Webber to get the ball, where he nearly traveled with it going upcourt in the frantic scene that followed, then found himself trapped by the double team of Carolina's George Lynch and Derrick Phelps.

In the midst of the chaos, with the clock winding down, Webber called a timeout he didn't have and the Tar Heels went on to a 77-71 victory following the free throws and possession.

"I had no idea that Michigan didn't have any timeouts. I looked at the bench and everyone was excited, and yet I said, 'Come on, guys. I hit one of two and we're only up two,'" said Sullivan. "I was upset at myself, and then everyone told me Michigan didn't have any more timeouts. I was really, really relieved"

