

---

## Top 10 Teams of the Decade

by MARK GREY

12.22.09

10. 2004-2005 UNC Men's Basketball - In just his second season in Chapel Hill Roy Williams led the Tar Heels to a National Championship. The team was loaded with talent, including 5 McDonalds All-Americans. After going 27-4 and earning a number one seed in the tournament, the Heels advanced to the final four. In the Semifinals game they blew out Michigan State, then beat a one-loss Illinois team for the title. Four players from the team would be drafted within the first 15 picks of that year's NBA draft.

Notable players: Sean May, Raymon Felton, Marvin Williams, Rashad McCants

9. 2004 USC Trojans Football - After finishing the 2003 season 12-1 and splitting the National Title with LSU, the Trojans were ranked preseason number 1. At the end of the season, they were still number 1 and became just the second team ever to be ranked #1 in AP polls the entire season. Although the Trojans only played two ranked teams during the regular season, they silenced their critics by beating the second-ranked Oklahoma Sooners 55-19 in the Orange Bowl. In a three year span, the Trojans went 37-2.

Notable players: Matt Leinhart, Reggie Bush, LenDale White, Steve Smith, Dwayne Jarrett, Fred Davis, Shaun Cody, Lofa Tatupa

8. 2007 Boston Celtics - With the off-season addition of Ray Allen and Kevin Garnett, expectations were high and the Celts delivered. After winning only 24 games the prior season, the Celtics made the biggest one season improvement in NBA history by winning 66 games. The Celtics won their division by 25 games and the conference by 7. After a rough first two rounds of the playoffs that saw both series go 7 games, the Celtics settled down and easily won the conference and NBA finals.

Notable players: Paul Pierce, Kevin Garnett, Ray Allen, Rajon Rondo, James Posey

7. 2005 Texas Longhorns Football - The Longhorns spent the entire season ranked number 2 behind defending champion Trojans. After winning the Big 12 title game 70-3, the Horns earned the right to meet USC in the National Title game. In what might have been the greatest bowl game ever, Vince Young led Texas to a 3-point victory. During the season, Texas scored 652 total points, an NCAA single season record. In total, 24 members of the team would make the NFL. In a two year span, the Longhorns went 25-1.

Notable players: Vince Young, Selvin Young, Jamaal Charles, Michael Huff, Michael Griffin, Cedric Griffin, Brian Orakpo, David Thomas

6. 2006-2007 Florida Gators Mens Basketball - After winning the National title the year before, the Gators returned all five starters. The team jumped out to a 24-2 record before running into a cold streak that saw them go 1-3. Once the Gators got back on track they ran through the tournament for the second year in a row, becoming the first team to repeat in 16 years. Five Gators were drafted by the NBA that year including 3 in the first 10 picks, the first time that had ever happened.

Notable players: Al Horford, Corey Brewer, Joakim Noah

5. 2001 Detroit Red Wings - After being upset in the first round of the playoffs the year before, the Red Wings had a busy off-season. The Wings traded for Dominik Hasek, and signed Brett Hull. It was the first time in NHL history that 3,500 career goal scorers were on the same team. The Red Wings finished with the best record in the league, and went on to win the Stanley Cup.

4. 2004 New England Patriots - Despite winning the Super Bowl the year before, the Patriots still felt they needed to upgrade their running game. In the off-season they traded for pro bowl running back Corey Dillon and the move paid off. Dillon ran for 1,600 yards as the Pats finished the season 14-2. After a first round bye, the Pats beat a red-hot Colts team 20-3, then handed the Steelers their first loss in 15 weeks. They then defeated the Philadelphia Eagles to win their second Super Bowl in two years.

Notable players: Tom Brady, Corey Dillon, Asante Samuel, Rodney Harrison, Ty Warren, Vince Wilfork, Richard

## Seymour, Willie McGinest

3. 2001 Los Angeles Lakers - The second of three consecutive title teams featured both Shaq and Kobe in their primes. Both players averaged 28 points a game and received all NBA honors. After winning 56 games in the regular season, the Lakers ran through the playoffs with the best post season record in NBA history: 15-1.

Notable players: Kobe Bryant, Shaquille O'Neal, Derek Fisher, Horace Grant, Ron Harper, Isaiah Rider, Robert Horry, Brian Shaw, Devean George

2. 2008-2009 Connecticut Women's Basketball - The Huskies returned 10 players from the previous year's final four team, and were ranked preseason number one. The Huskies didn't just go 30-0; they won every game by double digits. They beat the second and fourth ranked teams in the country by 30 and 32, respectively. In the Big East Championship game, they faced Louisville (who they would meet in the NCAA title game) and beat them 75-36. UConn had dominant teams in the past, but the 2009 team had no peers.

1. 2001 Miami Hurricanes Football - Arguably the greatest college football team ever assembled, the Canes went 12-0 and won the Rose Bowl. After being passed over for a chance to play for the BCS title the season before despite going 11-1, the Canes set out to let the nation know they were the best team in the country. They scored 42 points a game while only allowing 9.8 a game. They went to Tallahassee to beat rival Florida State by 23 points, beat 14th ranked Syracuse 59-0, and 12th ranked Washington 65-7. They met fourth ranked Nebraska in the BCS title game and blew them out by 23 points. Over a three year span, the U went 35-2.

Notable players - Willis McGahee, Najeh Davenport, Andre Johnson, Antrel Rolle, Mike Rump, Ken Dorsey, Ed Reed, Sean Taylor, Clinton Portis, Phillip Buchan, Frank Gore, Jonathan Vilma, Vince Wilfork, Bryant McKinnie, Kellen Winslow, Jermy Shockey, Jerome McDougle