



Thursday, March 28, 2024

NORTH CAROLINA TAR HEELS VS. ALABAMA CRIMSON TIDE

Game Time: 09:39 pm ET

Watch: CBS

Selection: North Carolina -4

The Sweet 16 is upon us with a great matchup between the 1 seed in the West Region North Carolina Tar Heels vs the 4 seed in the West Region Alabama Crimson Tide. In this year's NCAA Tournament, the ACC is a remarkable 8-1 of which North Carolina is part of. Teams from the SEC of which Alabama is in is 5-6. Over the last 3 years in the NCAA Tournament, the ACC is 29-11 (.724 %) while the SEC is 19-20 (.487 %).

The Tar Heels enter this contest playing their best basketball of the season winners of 10 of their last 11 and coming off a very convincing victory over Michigan State 85-69. This is a well-balanced veteran squad led by two Seniors that are their best players, Guard RJ Davis and Center Armando Bacot. Davis the AP ACC player of the year averages a league best 21.4 points per game and recently became UNC's first 1st Team All-American since 2017. Bacot, a 2nd team All ACC selection, is a walking double double who averages 14.4 points per game and 10.2 rebounds per game. According to KenPom the Tar Heels are ranked 16th in the nation in Adjusted Offensive Efficiency and 6th in Adjusted Defensive Efficiency. North Carolina also has a massive edge on the defensive glass ranking 6th in defensive rebounding percentage compared to Alabama who ranks 244th in that category.

By now we are all aware of Bama's scoring prowess, but their Achilles heel continues to be their defense. This is a unit that is 101st on KenPom for Adjusted Defensive Efficiency and gives up an average of 80.9 points per game which ranks 355th in the nation. They have given up 99 plus points 4 times already this season. The Tar Heels average 81.8 points per game and have a 14-2 overall record when scoring more than 80.9 points per game. In the 1st round of the tournament, Alabama gave up 96 points to Charleston who's Adjusted Offensive Efficiency on KenPom ranks 54th. It is simply very hard to trust the Crimson Tide to get stops.

For all their scoring, the Crimson Tide have struggled vs some of the better defenses in the country. For instance, they lost both their games vs Tennessee losing 91-71 at UT and then 81-74 at home. The

Volunteers have the 3rd ranked defense on KenPom. They also lost at Auburn who has the 5th ranked defense 99-81. Most recently they were held to 72 points by a Grand Canyon team that ranks 33rd in defense.

The team trends coming into this game favor the Tar Heels who overall are 21-15 ATS and 19-14 ATS as a favorite. Alabama is 2-6 ATS as an underdog and 1-4 ATS when an underdog by 4 points or more. What is most glaring are the records vs Quad 1 opponents. North Carolina has a record of 9-3 while Alabama has a record of 4-10. North Carolina has been the better team all year and will make the stops while converting the big buckets to advance to the Elite 8. Back the North Carolina Tar Heels laying 4 points.

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Any questions or comments can be sent to: wiz@wizardraceandsports.com

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