



## Hoops marathon: For kids whose time may be short

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DURHAM -- Several weeks before the Duke and UNC men's highly ranked basketball teams meet for the first time this year, 100 or so students from each school will vie for hoop bragging rights in a 26.2-hour marathon.

But more important, the students playing in the contest Saturday and Sunday at Duke's Wilson Gym will be raising money for a good cause -- Bounceback Kids.

Formerly called Hoop Dreams, Bounceback Kids is a program designed to give children with life-threatening illnesses at Duke and UNC hospitals a chance to participate in sporting and cultural activities.

In addition, this year's marathon also will raise money to support the Chordoma Foundation started by Josh Sommer, also a Duke senior. Sommer started the program in honor of Justin Strauss, a child in the Bounceback program who died last year.

Chordoma is a malignant bone cancer that develops in the head and spine.

The upcoming marathon will be the fourth between the two schools. It could be among the most spirited because the game will be co-chaired by a brother-sister tandem -- Moe Long, a freshman at UNC and Paula Long, a senior at Duke.

The two got involved in the program after seeing a special about Hoop Dreams on television during the 2005 Final Four, which was, coincidentally, the year UNC won its most recent national championship.

Moe Long, who was only a freshman in high school at the time, said he was blown away by the program's good work.

"I think it's important for every child to just be a kid," said Moe Long, a Robertson Scholar

Paula Long, a B.N. Duke Scholar, said raising money for Bounceback Kids is "absolutely my most favorite thing to do." It will be her second year of co-chairing the game.

"I'm so inspired by the kids I work with," Paula Long said. "It keeps me grounded ... ."

Tar Heel time?

The Blue Devils currently hold a 2-1 advantage over the Tar Heels in the event which has raised approximately \$120,000 since it was started in 2005-06, but Moe Long believes this is UNC's year to claim victory.

"I will predict a victory for UNC in 2009," Moe Long said. "I'll be playing on a couple of teams, so that will solidify our chances. We can't let Duke beat us. We've got to even up the record here."

Because the Longs, both of whom are English majors, grew up in Carrboro, Paula Long acknowledges a certain fondness for the Tar Heels. However, she is clear that she pulls for the Blue Devils whenever they meet Carolina.

"I love Duke, but I grew up a Tar Heel," Paula Long said. "Whenever they're playing Duke, I root for Duke, but I wish no ill will to the Tar Heels."

While the age-old rivalry often divides the two schools, Paula Long said the marathon is an opportunity to bring the schools together to work for a good cause.

Lisa Brachman, executive director of Bounceback Kids, said she has been impressed by the Longs' commitment to Bounceback Kids. She also noted that their dad's band performs during the marathon.

"They've really made it a family affair," Brachman said.

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