Cota's Floaters Lift UNC Offense

UNC point guard Ed Cota took 10 shots against the Tigers, giving him a total of 33 in his last two contests.

By BRET STRELOW Assistant Sports Edito

CLEMSON, S.C. - North Carolina point guard Ed Cota had Clemson sharpshooter Will Solomon on a string

Solomon drilled a 3-pointer with 23 seconds left in the first half, but he left Cota just enough time to return the

Cota, isolated one-on-one with Solomon, pulled up from the top of the key and knocked in a trey with two sec-onds left to send the Tar Heels scurrying to the locker room with a five-point

"I love when it's crunch time, but you've got to keep your poise out there," Cota said. "I was about to penetrate, and he was backing up, so I just took the

Cota, who finished Sunday's victory against Clemson with a team-best 17 oints, has been taking a lot of shots lately. He was averaging 6.2 field goal attempts a game before Thursday's overtime loss to Duke.

He attempted a career-high 23 shots that evening and followed up that effort with 10 more against Clemson on

"I've never seen nobody that could stop and go like that," Clemson guard

"He was shooting floaters right and left that were noth ing but net." Cota resembled

Sherwin Williams will all his work in the paint. But his finishing

ability was more characteristic of Shammond Cota scored all

extra pressure on UNC's opponents. five of his twopoint field goals in the paint.
"I think I'm a better player when I penetrate more," Cota said. "Playing on want to take the crowd out

Jason Capel said Ed Cota's ability

to beat his man puts

The crowd at Littlejohn Coliseum

was definitely in the game as Clemson drew to 58-56 with 7:02 left. But Cota deflated the crowd when he drew a foul from Clemson center Ray Henderson and banged home both free throws.

"I think that took a little bit of energy out of them," UNC guard Joseph Forte said. "Ed stepped up big tonight in crunch time.' When Cota wasn't scoring, he was

nning the show like General Patton. He registered a game-high seven assists committing three turnovers

"They have to guard him when he drives, and if the guard helps, we're open," said UNC forward Jason Capel, who benefited from Cota's driving abil-

"If a big man comes and helps, then our big men are open. If nobody comes and helps, he can take anybody one-onone. It's a lot of pressure on the opposition when he's aggressive.'

Cota's aggressiveness, it should be remembered, allowed him to average 31.5 points a game at Tilden High School in New York before he went to Thomas More Academy in Oakdale, Conn., for his junior and

During Cota's junior season, he averaged 21 points a contest to lead his squad to the New England prep title.

"That's high school, and now that I'm in college, a lot of teams ain't used to seeing me going out and scoring that much because I'm playing this role,"

That role comprises doing all the other things a leader must do, including distributing the basketball and rebounding errant shots.

Cota, who collected five first-half rebounds, was the only Tar Heel with more than one board in the first half. He also notched a team-high four

assists and matched Capel's nine points in the first 20 minutes "I believe Cota was brilliant from start to finish," Clemson coach Larry

"The dagger in the back was Cota He sliced us pretty good."

The Sports Editor can be reached at

Box Score

UNC 73, Clemson 60

MEN'S TENNIS

Marcio Petrone trailed the Campbell pair of Julian Tejada and Alexander Grupp 6-3 before rallying to an 8-6 win. At the No. 1 singles slot, Phillips needed tie breaker in the first set to defeat Andreas Mardbrink 7-6 (7-4), 6-2.

"I was a little nervous, and I think I came out a little slow in singles and doubles," Phillips said. "As the match went on, I started finding a rhythm, and that really helped out.

The rest of the Tar Heel doubles pairs had little difficulty in disposing of the Camels (0-1). North Carolina's secondseeded duo of Tryston Meniane and David Cheatwood defeated Mardbrink and Hans Peter Gaber 8-6, while third-seeded Tar Heels Assaf Drori and Greg Archer topped Loic Legoff and Sasa

UNC swept the singles matches without losing a set. Drori took out Grupp 6-4, 6-0 at No. 2, and Cheatwood topped Tejada 7-6 (7-4), 6-3 at the third seed.

Other Tar Heel winners were No. 4 Petrone against Gaber 6-0, 6-2, No. 5 Meniane against Ljumic 6-3, 6-3, and No.6 Chad Riley against Legoff 6-0, 6-1. Despite the clean sweep, UNC coach

Sam Paul said his team did not play to its potential.

"We can play better in doubles. They stretched us a little bit," Paul "We settled down and played some pretty good tennis in singles

Although Campbell provided little opposition for UNC, the Tar Heels used the

match to get a strong start to the year

and to gauge their early-season progress.
"It's a great way to start. We can see where we are standing," Drori said. "We got a feel for the season in these first couple of matches.

UNC senio

Tripp Phillips rallied for comeback

victories in singles

the Camels

Last weekend's South Carolina Winter Invitational was cancelled because of poor weather, so this weekend was UNC's first competitive play in two weeks

We need a lot of matches," Paul said. "We're just going to focus on getting better and improving every day

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North Carolina's Marcio Petrone prepares to unload a serve against the Camels. Petrone picked up victories at No. 4 singles and No. 4 doubles.

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VITALE

proud of is I work out, and I don't drink and smoke, and I watch what I eat. I

haven't had red meat in seven years.

DTH: A big part of how you've made your name is through your enthusiasm in your announcing. Was there any time, particularly early in your career, when

DV: Not really. The one thing that's been great with ESPN and ABC is, like a John Madden or like a Chris Berman, whenever you're unique and different, and certainly I am obviously different, I think they can tell whether the public has responded. And the public response whether somebody agrees with what you

say or not, I can respect that.

But the bottom line is I think the pub lic has responded because they know, one, that I work my butt off in preparation to get as much information about players and knowledge, and I try to pour my heart in it.

What I've learned over the years is how to blend when to really use my enthusiasm when to hold back And that's the key. But they've always tried to tell me, 'Be yourself.' Because

whatever you've got going, it's working. Don't change to try and please other people. And you can't.

I think one thing I would recommend (is) in life you've got to be what you can be, be the best you can be, work hard at what you do and have a certain amount of enthusiasm and passion for what you do, and you'll be a success in life. And that's the way I try to carry my life.
DTH: A criticism I've heard of yours

is that people think you show favoritism toward Duke over ...

DV: That to me is probably the most absurd comment. Yeah, I agree with you. I had a couple guys tell me that last night joking around. That is so ridiculous. Have you ever heard me talk about North Carolina when North Carolina's winning? Heard me talk about Dean Smith when they were winning? I find that to be true if you're doing that protecting and cheering your school on when they're not doing well versus the school that's doing well. You can never say that about me. If North Carolina does well, I'm going to be

right there saluting them.

If you ever get in this racket as a writer

or TV guy, you can't please everyone. I'll give you the best example of that, I did a great game between Indiana and Ohio State for the Big Ten championship years ago. I'm (at the airport) in Indianapolis, and all these fans come running over to and all these fans come running over to me from Indiana: 'We were tired last night, Dick, of you talking about Jimmy Jackson and the Buckeyes, and Jimmy Jackson this and Jimmy Jackson that.' Now I get off the plane, I'm laughing as

I leave. To me it's great when they do that. It means they're listening to you.

I get off the plane at Cincinnati at the airport. I'm standing there five minutes at the airport, and these fans come over from Buckeye land: 'Oh, my God. All you talked about last night was Calbert Cheaney. You only talked about the general Robert Montgomery Knight.' I just threw my things up in the air, my papers, and I said, 'You try and win doing this.'

You walk with me tomorrow, and I will guarantee. I will bet. I'll tell you what I will do

"What I've learned over the

years is how to blend when

to use my enthusiasm and

when to hold back."

DICK VITALE

College Basketball Analyst

(Standing and yelling) I'll give a million dollars to your thousand, and will guarantee that when I walk into Cameron Indoor Stadium tomorrow at least a minimum of five

up to me and say, 'Oh , Dicky $V,\ you$ talked about North Carolina. That's all you talked about the other night - Carolina's comeback.' You can't please everybody, man. You've just got to be honest and do an honest job. And I feel I

I don't care who wins, believe me in my heart. You think I care whether Carolina beats Duke or Duke beats Carolina? I just care to have a great game everybody having fun. Somebody's going to win, somebody's going to lose. All I know is one of my favorite places to come is Tobacco Road because I know one thing at Carolina and Duke - you're always going to see great basketball.
You've got fans that care about it. But

obviously Carolina fans – there are a lot of them today in deep depression. I mean they take it like it's life and death. And the same at Duke. Duke loses, and it's like the end of the world.

> The Sports Editor can be reached at sports@unc.edu.



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