

Forte Helps Send Tar Heel Seniors Out With Win

Freshman Joseph Forte hit a leaner with 51 seconds left in overtime to push UNC past Georgia Tech.

By EVAN MARKFIELD
Senior Writer

In the final seconds of regulation, it looked like Senior Night at the Smith Center might come to a fitting end. North Carolina senior point guard Ed Cota had the ball in his hands with a chance to win it for his team.

Instead the game went to overtime, and the game-winner went to a freshman, as Joseph Forte's layup with 51 seconds remaining in the extra period gave the Tar Heels a 74-72 win against Georgia Tech on Wednesday night in their home finale.

Forte had to put the up-and-under layup past 7-foot Yellow Jacket center Jason Collier with 6-11 Alvin Jones approaching fast.

"Forte made a heck of a shot," Tech coach Bobby Cremins said. "Not many freshmen can make moves like that. He turned the corner on us, we tried to trap him, and he beat the trap. That was the one we had to stop. You have to give that freshman a lot of credit."

Although Forte ended up the hero, Cota had his chance as the clock wound down in regulation. Holding for the final shot, Cota drove the lane as the seconds ticked away only to be stopped by the Tech defense.

"I thought it was going to be over,"

Cota said. "I couldn't think of a better ending. But I drove past my man, and there was another man there."

While Cota had his chance, the Yellow Jackets also had an opportunity to come up with a game-winner, though theirs came after Forte's bucket near the end of the extra stanza.

But junior Shaun Fein's 3-point attempt with seconds remaining didn't go, and the Tar Heels escaped.

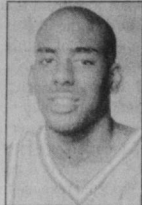
"We have a (3-point) play, and Shaun Fein can shoot," said Cremins, who received a warm welcome from UNC's fans in his final Smith Center appearance. "So yeah, we were going for the win. Why not?"

At first, it appeared there would not even be a chance for last-second drama for either team.

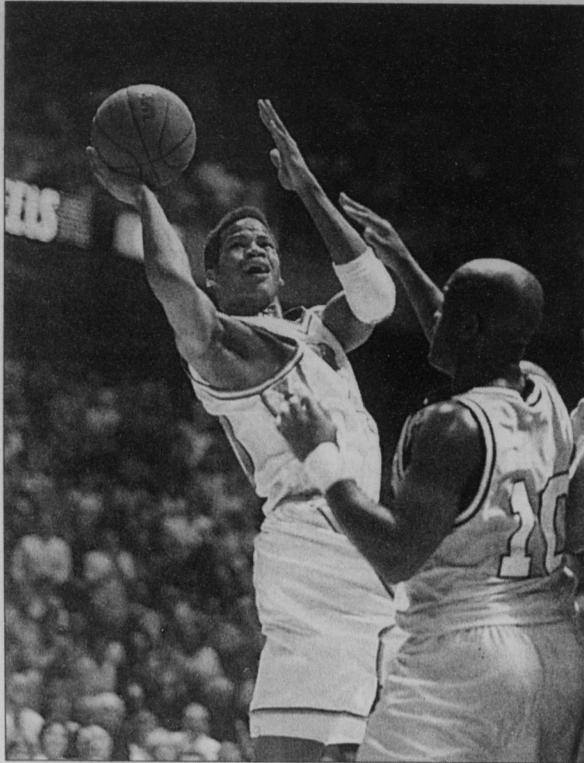
Down just two points at halftime, the Tar Heels came out of the blocks scorching in the second half. A one-handed stuff from Julius Peppers capped an 11-0 run in the first 4:20 of the half, and it appeared UNC was on its way to a repeat of its last matchup with the Yellow Jackets.

In Atlanta on Jan. 29, the teams were knotted at 28 at the half before the Tar Heels blew up to take the game 70-53. Things looked to be heading in the same direction after Peppers' rim-rocking antics.

"We started to collapse in the second half," Cremins said. "I thought it might be a blowout, but we hung in for once. We fought. We looked like a basketball team."



Senior point guard Ed Cota had 11 assists and one turnover in his final regular-season home game.



DTH/SEFTON IPOCK

UNC freshman guard Joseph Forte squeezes off a floater. Forte scored 19 points, including the game-winning bucket, in the Tar Heels' win.

The reason Georgia Tech hung in was Collier. With 4:27 remaining in the second half, the big man drained a 3-pointer to cap a personal 8-2 run against UNC and pull the Jackets within two at 59-57.

The Tar Heels might have avoided the overtime altogether if they had snagged a few offensive boards late in the second half. UNC had just two offensive rebounds in the second half and eight overall, allowing the Yellow Jackets to hang close despite shooting just 32.3 percent in the second half.

Only the fact that the Tar Heels didn't turn the ball over — quite a feat considering their penchant for losing the handle of late — kept them ahead.

And Cota, though he didn't get his storybook ending of hitting the winning shot on Senior Night, had 10 assists and no turnovers in the second half and overtime.

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

UNC's Peppers Checks In With Clutch Performance

By BRIAN MURPHY
Senior Writer

Julius Peppers snuck a peek at the scorers table. Another look. And another.

Still no Kris Lang.

With Lang, North Carolina's starting power forward, nursing a strained left quadriceps, Peppers knew he would have to stick it out.

"I don't know what happened to Kris," Peppers said following UNC's 74-72 overtime victory Wednesday night at the Smith Center.

"I was looking for him a couple of times, but he didn't come back. So I knew it was up to me."

Peppers played the final 3:35 of regulation and all five overtime minutes in his 23 minutes of work. But it wasn't just minutes Peppers was providing.

The walk-on defensive end scored a career-high 14 points on 6-of-7 shooting. Of his six baskets, three were dunks, including a monster left-handed stuff down the lane.

"When I get the ball, I usually look to pass," Peppers said. "Tonight, I was trying to go to the rack."

And when Peppers, all 6-foot-8, 270 pounds of him, decides he wants to go to the basket, standing in front of him is not a pleasant option.

With the game tied at 59, Peppers decided he wanted to take it to the basket. Off a timeout, UNC's top reserve told Ed Cota, the team's senior point guard, of his plans.

"I told him to come to my side and throw me the lob," Peppers said.

When Peppers speaks, people listen. Cota obliged with the pass, and Peppers stuffed it home and drew the fourth foul on Georgia Tech's Jason Collier.

Collier, who scored a game-high 25 points, was Peppers' responsibility most of the night. At 6-11, Collier presents matchup problems with his ability to shoot from outside.

Peppers was able to move him from the paint area and limit Collier to six boards, three below his ACC-leading average.

"It's tough job," Peppers said. "He's one of the best big men in the country."

While Collier was giving the Tar Heels fits on one end, Peppers was doing the same to the Yellow Jackets.

"He's a big kid, a strong kid, very physical, and he played well tonight," Collier said.

With Lang listed as day-to-day, Peppers will have to continue to play well if the Tar Heels hope to advance in the ACC and NCAA tournaments.

"He gave us a lot of energy. He can help us out a lot," Cota said.

Then he smirked. "He has a hard time guarding 6-11 guys, but he can help us a lot."

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

UNC 74, Georgia Tech 72

Box Score	
Go. Tech	32 32 8 72
UNC	30 34 10 74
GT (72)	
	fg ft rb a pf tp
Floyd	27 5-10 0-0 2-5 1 4 25
Collier	42 7-14 9-10 1-6 1 4 25
Jones	40 2-9 5-6 2-10 3 4 29
Fein	39 4-12 2-2 1-6 5 2 13
Akins	37 4-9 0-0 0-1 2 2 11
Vines	22 0-2 0-0 1-2 3 2 0
Moore	18 1-2 0-0 1-4 2 3 2
Total	225 23-58 16-18 8-38 17 21 72

Percentages — FG: 39.1, FT: 88.9, 3-point goals — 10-28, 35.7 (Floyd 2-6, Collier 2-4, Fein 3-8, Akins 3-6, Moore 0-1). Team rebounds — 2. Blocked shots — 3 (Moore, Collier, Jones). Turnovers — 16 (Jones 7, Fein 3, Vines 2, Akins, Collier, Floyd, Moore). Steals — 5 (Akins 2, Collier, Fein, Moore).

UNC (74)	
	min fg ft rb a pf tp
Capel	41 3-8 5-6 1-7 4 4 11
Lachowski	1 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 1 0
Haywood	41 5-9 2-5 3-8 1 4 12
Newby	8 0-1 0-0 0-0 0 0 0
Cota	43 2-8 1-2 0-7 11 0 8
Lang	23 4-8 4-4 0-1 0 2 12
Forte	39 7-19 4-4 3-5 0 2 19
Peppers	23 6-7 2-3 1-4 1 3 18
Holmes	2 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 0 0
Melendez	1 0-1 0-0 0-0 0 0 0
Everett	1 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 1 0
Johnson	1 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 0 0
Owens	3 0-1 0-0 0-0 0 0 0
Total	225 27-63 18-24 8-32 17 17 74

Percentages — FG: 42.9, FT: 75.0, 3-point goals — 2-11, 18.2 (Capel 0-2, Cota 1-2, Forte 1-4, Melendez 0-1). Team rebounds — 9 (Capel 3, Peppers 2, Cota, Haywood, Forte, Melendez). Steals — 11 (Forte 5, Cota 2, Capel, Newby, Peppers). Technical fouls — None. Attendance — 20,465. Officials: Larry Ross, Zeltun Steed, Bryan Karay.

BRAKES
50% OFF
Pads and Shoes
EXPIRES 5/15/00

EXHAUST
\$20 OFF
any exhaust that consists of muffler & tailpipe
EXPIRES 5/15/00

Winter Specials
meineke
Discount Mufflers and Brakes
407 E. Main Street • Carrboro
933-6888
Ask How To Receive A FREE Meineke® T-Shirt

SHOCKS
Buy 3 and Get One FREE (right rear) or 25% OFF the second shock with purchase of 2
EXPIRES 5/15/00

OIL CHANGE
\$19.95 Oil Change OR
\$9.95 with any Brake, Shock or Exhaust Service
EXPIRES 5/15/00

THIS SUMMER

or

[YOU PICK]

GO TO **UPSTAGE.COM** FOR DETAILS

UPSTAGE ALL THE WEB'S A STAGE™

Still Accepting Applications for Fall 2000 UNC Semester in London

Applications still being accepted through UNC Study Abroad—Fall 2000 and Spring 2001 programs are still open and will be filled on a first-come, first-serve basis for eligible* applicants.

INFORMATION SESSION
Wednesday, March 8 at 4:30
Graham Memorial Building, Room 039

Program Info and Application instructions: <http://study-abroad.unc.edu>

*Eligibility: All students in the UNC Honors Program; All Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors with 3.0+ GPA and with approval of the resident directors listed below.

Contact them NOW for an interview.

Fall 2000: Professor Donald Searing, Pol. Science (ddsearin@email.unc.edu)
Spring 2001: Professor David D. Dill, Public Policy (david_dill@unc.edu)

Study Abroad Office
12 Caldwell Hall
Open M-F 12-5

Abroad
Study