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Who Would've Thought?

Tar Heels Shake Tulsa, Earn Unexpected Trip to Final Four

By BRIAN MURPHY
Senior Writer

AUSTIN, Texas — Joseph Forte hasn't been a typical freshman basketball player since he arrived on the North Carolina campus.

"I knew the tradition of freshmen, and I didn't want to be like a regular freshman," Forte said. "I wanted to stand out."

On Sunday, Forte stood out all right. He stood out by carrying the Tar Heels past Tulsa 59-55 and into the Final Four with a career-high 28 points. He stood out as the South Regional Most Outstanding Player. Maybe more remarkably, he stood out as a freshman.

The tradition is that UNC freshmen are seen but not heard, and certainly not on the court.

But as the most highly touted member of UNC's freshman class, Forte told his teammates in pick-up games that he would average 12 points a game his first season.

"I was saying I'm going to be a factor, I'm going to average this amount of points, I'm going to be a key factor, a go-to guy, just ridiculous stuff," he said.

As for his teammates, they told the cocky new kid to shut up and then voted

him to tote around the team's green bag, filled with medical supplies.

So when Forte led all scorers with 31 points in the Blue-White scrimmage and coach Bill Guthridge hardly mentioned him in the postgame press conference, Forte finally took the hint.

"I just got the feeling after that game that freshmen aren't supposed to get this much attention, so I'm going to talk about Ed Cota and Brendan Haywood," Forte said.

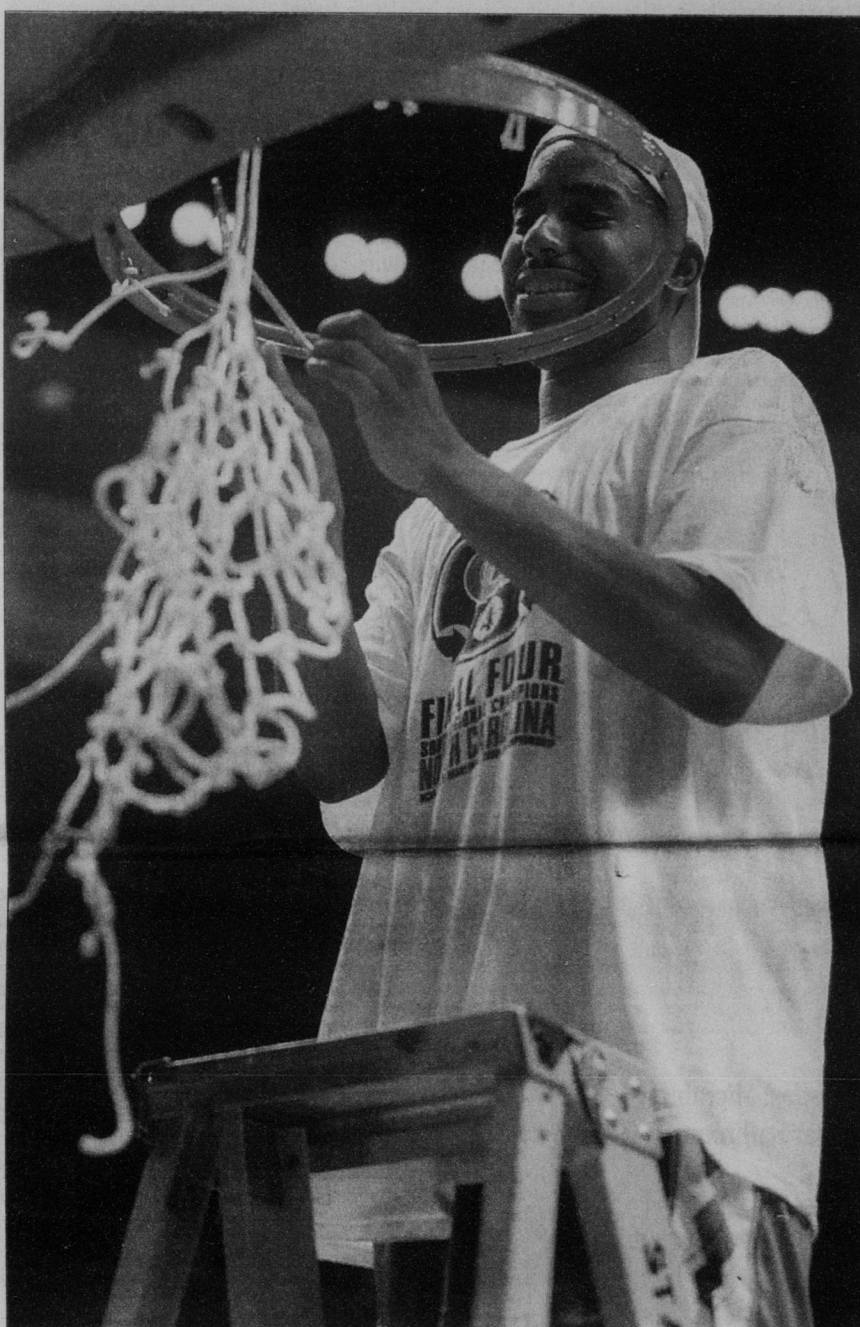
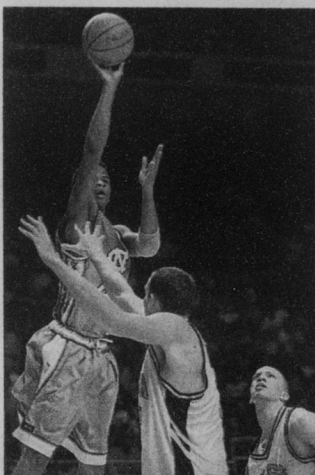
After Sunday, there is no denying Forte, who exceeded his bold scoring prediction and became the first Tar Heel freshman to lead the team in scoring with 16.7 points a game.

With the Tar Heel game plan of pounding the ball down low stymied by Tulsa, which doubled UNC center Brendan Haywood every time he touched the ball, it was up to Forte to bail out the offense.

"We probably shouldn't have focused on their size," said Tulsa forward Eric

See MEN'S BASKETBALL, Page 7

Men's Basketball	
UNC59
Tulsa55
UNC74
Tennessee69



North Carolina senior Ed Cota (above) cuts down the net after the Tar Heels' 59-55 victory against Tulsa in the South Regional Final. It will mark Cota's third trip to the Final Four in his four years at UNC. Joseph Forte (above left), who scored 28 points, was named the Most Outstanding Player at the South Regional.

UNC's Wins Soaked in Suspense

The victories against Tulsa and Tennessee are two of 21 NCAA tournament games decided by five points or less.

By EVAN MARKFIELD
Senior Writer

AUSTIN, Texas — The people at CBS must be happy to know that Kris Lang and North Carolina have the network's best interest at heart.

With their 59-55 win against Tulsa in the South Regional Final on Sunday and their 74-69 victory against Tennessee on Friday, the Tar Heels have made sure viewers remain on the edges of their seats right until the buzzer.

"You've got to have suspense," Lang said with a laugh. "It's good for the ratings. That's Carolina basketball. We've got to keep you on your toes."

Leading 55-48 with 2:04 remaining against Tulsa in Sunday's contest, the Tar Heels turned the ball over on three consecutive possessions, and the Golden Hurricane cut the lead to three. Two of those turnovers came from point guard Ed Cota, who had seven on the game against the Tulsa pressure.

"That was uncharacteristic of the way we handle it," UNC coach Bill Guthridge said. "Ed was completely worn out there at the end, and they were able to take advantage of that."

While defense and free throws would seal the game, UNC was in the midst of another nail-biter just two days after squeaking past Tennessee.

Trailing the Volunteers by seven with 4:48 remaining Friday, the Tar Heels battled back and finally pulled ahead on a Cota layup with 1:59 to go. After building the lead to six on free throws by Joseph Forte and Julius Peppers, the Tar Heels got a scare when Vols point guard Tony Harris buried a 3 to make it 70-67 with 13 seconds on the clock.

But again UNC hit its free throws

See SUSPENSE, Page 7



Freshman Dana Leventhal chants "Final Four" with a mob of fans that stormed Franklin Street after the Tar Heels' 59-55 win against Tulsa in the South Regional Final.

Campus, Franklin Street Erupt in Frenzied Celebration

By LAUREN BEAL
Assistant University Editor

The grin on Mike Tong's face stretched from ear to ear as students passed him above their heads through the crowd.

As the screaming below him grew louder, the sophomore surfed above the crowd faster and faster until, arms and legs flailing, he fell to the street.

Those around him gasped. But the collision with the pavement didn't stop him for a second — he pushed away outstretched hands, jumped to his feet and let out a deafening yell.

"This is my third time up there," Tong said as he cheered. "They just screamed my name and threw me up."

Tong's position above the crowd gave him a bird's-eye view of the mayhem of Franklin Street on Sunday afternoon.

Only minutes after the Tar Heels defeated Tulsa and advanced to the Final Four, throngs of UNC students flooded Franklin Street, adorning the

trees and storefronts with toilet paper and filling the air with the sound of firecrackers, chants and screams.

Sophomore Matt Miller from Laurinburg stood several rows back from the crackling bonfire that sent smoke spiraling through the air.

Squashed against friends and strangers, Miller joined in the revelry, celebrating the win and looking forward to the upcoming game in Indiana. "I'm thinking this is greatly insane that people come out here and raise hell," he said. "Yeah, I think we're going all the way. Hell yeah!"

Above his head, one student dangled precariously from a tree with his camera while others watched from the safety of Franklin Street building rooftops.

Girls with painted faces and Carolina

blue ribbons ran through the crowd, while several wide-eyed young children held their ears in reaction to the noise.

Senior Dandrick Glenn made an appearance with his trombone, playing to celebrate Friday's and Sunday's victories.

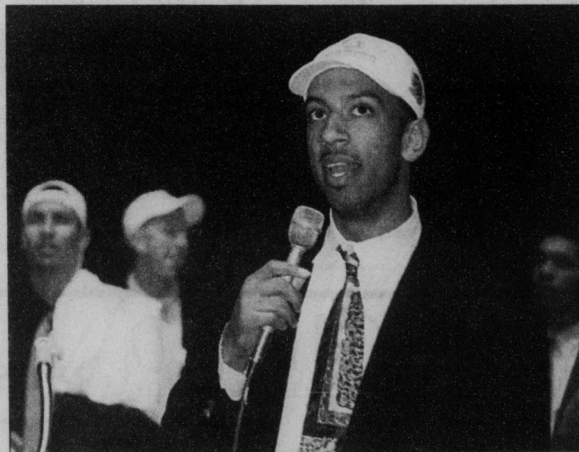
"When you go to the best University in the world, you get hyped up, and you get a little rowdy."

DANDRICK GLENN
UNC Senior

The celebration continued as fans packed into the Smith Center late Sunday night to greet the team members as they arrived back in Chapel Hill.

Nearly all of the open lower level sections were filled with screaming supporters, while Carolina blue and white

See REACTION, Page 7



Jason Capel, sophomore guard for UNC's Indianapolis-bound men's basketball team, thanks a crowd in the Smith Center on Sunday night.

INSIDE Monday

Smoke Screen

The newest tobacco lawsuit has pushed lawmakers to seek yet another special legislative session. See Page 5.

Give Us a Little Credit

A coming report on credit ratings for North Carolina counties could propel Orange County's rating into the top percentages. See Page 8.

Last Chance

The deadline has been extended to turn in applications for a spot on the committee to pick the next editor of The Daily Tar Heel. They are available at the front desk of the DTH in Suite 104 of the Student Union. Call 962-4086 with additional questions.

Today's Weather

Thunderstorms;
Low 70s.
Tuesday: Cloudy;
High 60s.

I'm just ready to go, ready to keep on dancin'.

Jason Capel