

FSU decisions Furman after halftime fight

By Gerald Ensley
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GREENVILLE, S.C. — Furman went to brawling with the big kids. Bad move. The big kids won.

Sparked by a halftime fight in the locker room hallway, the Florida State men's basketball team pulled away to a 97-75 victory over an undersized Furman on Saturday.

Forty-five fouls were called during the game, with Furman assessed 23 of those. Though no one fouled out, five players finished the game with four fouls apiece in a game that was officiated rather erratically — but not unfairly for either team.

The victory boosted FSU to 6-1 on the season — the best start by the Seminoles since the 1979-80 squad broke to an 11-1 record en route to a 22-9 season and FSU's last appearance in the NCAA tournament. Furman, with two players including its leading scorer Shawn Reid out with injuries, lost its fifth straight to fall to 3-6.

A crowd of 2,120 turned out, in the cozy and quaint 5,000-seat Greenville Memorial Coliseum, to see the return of Joe Williams. The seventh-year FSU head coach was the Furman head man for eight seasons, before leaving for FSU in 1978. He remains the most-winning coach in Furman history, having recorded a 142-87 record with five Southern Conference titles during his tenure here.

FSU never trailed Saturday and never led by less than four points. But the Seminoles had trouble separating themselves from the Paladins during a push-and-shove first half that saw two players from each squad — including FSU's Al Gipson and Jerome Fitchett — saddled with three fouls.

Ahead by as many as 11 points, FSU was slowed by the aggressive play of Furman for a spell of more than four minutes in the first half. With no player taller than 6-foot-7, the Paladins whittled FSU's lead from 11 points (35-24) with 6:33 to play in the half to four points (37-33) with 2:12 to play. FSU, led by four points apiece

by Maurice Myrick and reserve David Speights, then moved back to an 11-point lead, 44-33, at halftime.

Then came the fight — which was witnessed only by members of the two teams.

According to reports by FSU players, both teams were filing down a stairway to the locker rooms when FSU's Dean Shaffer was pushed from behind down a flight of about a dozen steps by Furman forward Kevin Bryant.

"Dean came back up the stairs, and then Big Al (Gipson) got into it," said FSU's Randy Allen, who said that players from both sides then began mixing it up. "I'd say it pumped us up. We already wanted to beat them. Then they showed the kind of sportsmanship they have, and that really got us going."

Suffering the most in the altercation, apparently, was the 6-4 Bryant, who reportedly was the recipient of a punch thrown by the 6-3 Shaffer. Though he refused comment, Bryant was discovered prone in the locker room after

See FSU, 6F

FSU

From 1F

the game as doctors attended to a gash of an inch or so over his left eye. Shaffer, already hobbled with an injured Achilles tendon, said he further strained his ankle in the fight.

"But I took care of that guy (Bryant)," said Shaffer.

FSU's Williams smilingly steered conversation away from the incident, saying only "I'm sure we were a little more aggressive in the second half because of that."

Furman head coach Jene Davis refused comment about the matter, citing an old Southern expression about the futility of getting in contests with skunks.

But Davis, who was hit with a double technical foul with 1:29 to play in the game, with Fitchett sinking all four shots for FSU's largest lead of the night (95-71), was plenty incensed by the physical style of play in the game — and

by what he perceived as the inability of the officials to control the game.

"Florida State was much stronger than us. And when a team is stronger, you have to depend on positioning yourself to be effective rebounding," said Davis. "That was a little difficult the way the game was called. The refs were letting Florida State get all over our backs."

It was pointed out to Davis that his team actually out-rebounded FSU 38-37 but was outshot 61 percent to 41 percent from the field.

"That," Davis said, citing the big gap in shooting percentage, "was because we were getting hacked and the refs weren't calling it."

Despite Davis' pique, the fact was FSU was just bigger, stronger and more able than Furman on this night.

The Seminoles were particularly effective in the second half, shooting 75 percent from the floor in the second half. With Furman

never closer than nine points in the second half, FSU was never challenged — and the play grew less physical down the stretch. Substitutes played the last three minutes for FSU, as well as throughout much of the game as the Seminoles played all 10 players who made the trip.

Allen led all Seminoles with 20 points, with Maurice Myrick, connecting on nine of 11 shots from the floor, adding 19 points. Gipson had 17, Joe Farrar had 14 and Fitchett added 10 to give FSU five players in double figures.

Furman was led by Noel Gilliard with 25 points.

"I think we're close to being in the groove," said Williams, whose team has won five straight. "I thought our passing was especially in the groove. Furman played excellent defense but we just passed very well."

"We've got a very tough schedule coming up, and we needed a win tonight."

FSU travels to play Cincinnati on Wednesday — the Seminoles'

first Metro Conference game of the season — and then plays nationally ranked North Carolina on Jan. 5 in Miami.

Florida State (97)

	FG	FT	Rb	Asst	S	Min	TP
Myrick	9-11	1-2	5	1	1	33	19
Allen	10-15	0-0	5	1	3	29	20
Gipson	8-16	1-1	4	1	2	33	17
Farrar	7-8	0-2	4	3	1	29	14
Shaffer	1-5	4-4	3	10	2	32	6
Mabry	0-1	0-2	0	0	0	3	0
Fitchett	1-2	8-10	6	1	0	20	10
Martin	0-0	0-0	1	0	0	4	0
Carter	2-2	0-0	1	0	0	3	4
Soeights	0-2	7-10	7	0	0	14	7
Totals	38-62	21-31	37	17	9	200	97

Furman (75)

	FG	FT	Rb	Asst	S	Min	TP
Gilliard	11-23	3-4	11	3	2	38	25
Washington	4-7	3-4	2	1	0	21	11
Churchill	0-2	3-6	3	1	1	21	3
Castile	5-10	1-1	2	5	0	30	11
Caswell	2-11	0-1	6	5	0	39	4
Bryant	1-2	0-0	0	0	0	8	2
Keen	2-5	2-2	0	1	0	8	6
Sims	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	1	0
Moore	5-11	1-2	5	1	0	21	11
Suttle	1-3	0-1	5	0	1	13	2
Totals	31-74	13-21	38	17	4	200	75

Halftime: Florida State 44, Furman 33;
Fouled out: none; Technical fouls: Davis (2);
Total fouls: Florida State — 21, Furman 23;
Attendance: 2120.