

Seminoles' rally falls five short

By Gerald Ensley
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Rousing finish. Horrible game.

Playing like a group of Sunday nappers suddenly awakened by firecrackers exploding under the bed, the Florida State men's basketball team fell short with a late charge Wednesday and wound up losing 74-69 to fourth-ranked Memphis State.

The record will show that FSU led by two points on three occasions in the first half. The record will show that FSU closed the Tigers' lead to but three points with 24 seconds to play. However, the record will be deceptive because both teams played sluggishly and with a noticeable lack of emotion throughout. And of the two teams, such lack of effort was most harmful to FSU.

"The only thing wrong with this team is we need to win," said FSU head coach Joe Williams. His team is now 7-8, has lost its last five games and seven of its last eight. And the Seminoles are now 0-4 in the Metro Conference — which puts them dead last in the eight-team league, with upcoming conference road games Saturday (Southern Mississippi) and Monday (Tulane).

Memphis State, a loser only to Metro opponent South Carolina this season, is 14-1.

FSU center Al Gipson led all scorers with 18 points. Memphis State freshman guard Vincent Askew led the Tigers with 16.

"I thought both teams played aspects of the game well," said Memphis State head coach Dana Kirk, whose team won for only the third time in its last eight visits to Tallahassee. "Certainly, it wasn't the best 40 minutes of basketball either team has played."

With the game broadcast locally on television, a crowd of only 5,863 turned out in the Tallahassee-Leon County Civic Center. It was a remarkably somnolent crowd whose only signs of enthusiasm sprouted in the second half when the student section began chanting "Joe (Williams) must go," holding up signs with the same message and tearing up a banner that was a mock-up of Williams' contract.

Williams' reply to the student's antics echoed what he told his players.

"When you lose, nobody is behind you," said Williams. "Until we win, those are normal things to say."

Crucial to the outcome was Memphis State's dominance of the boards, and FSU's continued poor shooting in the clutch. The Tigers wound up outrebounding the Seminoles 45-34, although 7-foot William Bedford and 6-10 Keith Lee had only five apiece. And FSU,

spite some key baskets in the final three minutes, shot only 43 percent from the floor.

"We just wanted it more. We know everybody's gunning for us," said Memphis State's Willie Becton, who led all rebounders with 10.

Becton was speaking about Memphis State's dominance in rebounding. His statement could just as easily have been applied to the game as a whole.

With both teams playing without any spark, the first 12 minutes of the game passed rather boringly. Twice, Memphis State led by four points, as Lee scored eight of his 10 first-half points in that stretch. Three times, FSU led by two points. The last of those leads came with 8:03 to play, as a jumper by point guard Joe Farrar gave FSU a 20-18 lead.

Memphis State, however, woke up enough to outscore FSU 17-4 over the next 6:27, taking its largest lead of the half, 35-24, with 1:36 left in the half. A brief rally by FSU, in which Seminole center Al Gipson connected on three free throws and forward Randy Allen added another, cut the Tigers' lead to seven points, 35-28, at halftime.

Less than a minute into the second half, the Seminoles received what appeared to be a major lucky break when Lee was saddled with his fourth foul and went to the bench with 19:09 remaining in the game. FSU responded over the next two minutes by cutting the Tigers' lead to five points twice, the last time coming with 15:58 to play.

But Memphis State — which seemed to score whenever it needed to despite shooting only 49 percent from the floor itself — responded with a 10-2 for a 51-38 lead with 11:54 to play.

Though Lee remained on the bench, the Tigers continued to hold their lead, climbing to their biggest margin, 14 points, when they took a 67-53 lead with 3:36 to play.

Lee finally returned with 2:36 to play, and Memphis State leading 67-57. It was then, thanks to poor foul shooting by the Tigers, that FSU made its last-ditch run. Playing a trap defense that forced a couple of Memphis State turnovers, and fouling whenever they failed to steal the ball in the backcourt, the Seminoles began to whittle down the Tigers' lead.

Three times in those final 2½

minutes, the Tigers missed the front end of one-and-one situations — one each by Lee, Bedford and Askew.

MEMPHIS STATE (74)

	FG	FT	Rb	Asst	S	Min	TP
Lee	4-9	2-3	5	0	0	23	10
Holmes	5-8	3-6	9	1	0	34	13
Bedford	3-8	0-2	5	1	0	26	6
Askew	8-14	0-1	7	3	0	36	16
Turner	2-4	7-8	5	1	2	28	11
Bepton	5-10	0-1	10	1	0	28	10
Boyd	4-10	0-0	3	2	2	22	8
Bailey	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	3	0
Team			1				
Totals	31-63	12-21	45	9	4	200	74

FLORIDA STATE (69)

	FG	FT	Rb	Asst	S	Min	TP
Allen	8-19	1-2	11	0	4	37	17
Myrick	7-14	0-0	9	1	3	36	14
Gipson	6-13	6-8	7	0	0	40	18
Fitchett	1-1	2-2	0	1	0	22	4
Farrar	4-11	1-2	3	4	0	36	9
Shaffer	3-9	1-2	2	1	2	25	7
Mabry	0-0	0-0	1	0	0	4	0
Team			1				
Totals	29-67	11-16	34	7	9	200	69

Halftime: Memphis State 35, FSU 28;
Total fouls: Memphis State 19, FSU 20;
Fouled out: Farrar (FSU); Techn. fouls:
none; Att. 5,863.