

FSU falls 77-63 to Southern Miss

By Gerald Ensley
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HATTIESBURG, Miss. — Let us quote actor Bill Murray, as he so succinctly put it in the movie "Stripes" after everything possible had gone wrong:

"And now, depression sets in."

Plunging to an emotional and physical nadir Saturday night, the Florida State men's basketball team was defeated 77-63 by Southern Mississippi.

The loss was the sixth in a row for FSU, and its eighth in nine games. The Seminoles are last in the Metro Conference with a record of 0-5. The 14-point margin of defeat matches FSU's previous worst against Virginia Tech.

Southern Miss, now 1-4 against FSU since the Golden Eagles joined the Metro in 1982, is 6-12 and 2-3 in the conference.

"This was the most disappointing loss, our worst game of the season," said an anguished FSU head coach Joe Williams. "I don't know what's wrong with us. We come out

here and freeze up, kick the ball away, do things we don't normally do. We had so many breakdowns.

"Southern Miss played a good game. But I didn't feel that Southern Miss caused us to make mistakes. We destroyed ourselves.

"No question, our confidence is the lowest it's ever been. But we've had great practices lately — championship-caliber practices with everybody hustling and hitting their shots. Then we come out and play like this. In 25 years of coaching, I've never seen anything like it."

The Fat Lady sung early in this game, as Southern Miss led by 10 points at halftime, 39-29, and by as many as 18 points in the second half. The Seminoles never led at any point in the game, the first time that has happened this season. And never in the final 13 minutes of the game did FSU cut the Golden Eagles' lead to less than double digits.

"We did what was necessary to win a ballgame," said Southern

See FSU, 3F

Miss head coach M.K. Turk. "Our offensive efficiency was very good. We ran the offense, took control and got good shots. And we rebounded well. That was about as smart as we've played all year."

What Southern Miss mainly did was pass well, shoot well and rebound well. Led by the outside shooting of guards Kenny Siler (18 points), Casey Fisher (14) and Michael Jett (10), Southern Miss made 55 percent of its field goal attempts compared to FSU's 45 percent. The Golden Eagles also outrebounded the Seminoles 43-37 — after mounting a 23-9 advantage at halftime.

About the only thing that Southern Miss didn't do better than FSU was shoot free throws. Southern Miss connected on only 13 of 28 free-throw attempts, compared to FSU's 13 of 26, making only six of its last 20 in the game's final three minutes when FSU was fouling desperately.

Southern Miss' dominance came despite a superb, hustling, game-long effort by 6-foot-11 FSU center Al Gipson, who had a career-high 16 rebounds, a game-high 27 points — including three forceful dunks — two blocked shots and a steal.

FSU's inability to take more advantage of Gipson's dominance of the shorter Golden Eagles was one of the things that irked Williams.

"There was Gipson scoring at will, and we couldn't get the ball to him," said Williams, who chided the play of his guards. "We didn't follow our game plan. We wanted to take the fast break if it was there. But otherwise, set up, move the ball around and wait for the defense to make a mistake."

"We never moved it long enough. We kept hurrying. Two, three passes then a shot."

The Seminoles opened the game by missing their first four shots, getting their first point on a free throw by Gipson with 17:40 left in the half, then their first field goal, also by Gipson, with 15:47 to go in the half.

The Golden Eagles led 8-3 after Gipson's field goal, then streaked to a 19-9 lead with 12:48 left in the half.

FSU whittled the margin to four points on two occasions, the last a 25-21 gap with 8:08 to play in the half. But despite good defense, including a pair of steals by Dean Shaffer, the Seminoles missed their next four shots — three of the misses by Randy Allen.

Southern Miss then reasserted itself, raced to a 12-point lead on two occasions, and settled for its 39-29 lead at intermission.

FSU cut the lead to eight points twice in the early going of the second half. But with 13:09 to play, a tip-in by center Adam Simmons put Southern Miss up 51-40, and FSU would get no closer than that 11-point margin the rest of the way.

FSU left after the game on a chartered airplane to New Orleans, where it will play Tulane on Monday.

FLORIDA STATE (63)

	FG	FT	Rb	Asst	S	Min	TP
Farrar	6-11	2-4	4	1	0	35	14
Mabry	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	9	0
Fitchett	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	20	0
Myrick	2-7	3-5	4	0	0	29	7
Carter	0-2	0-0	1	0	0	2	0
Shaffer	1-5	0-0	1	6	3	26	2
Allen	5-12	3-8	7	0	0	37	13
Gipson	11-19	5-9	16	1	1	39	27
Speights	0-0	0-0	1	0	0	3	0
Totals	25-56	13-26	37	8	4	200	63

SO. MISSISSIPPI (77)

	FG	FT	Rb	Asst	S	Min	TP
Fischer	6-12	2-5	4	6	3	37	14
Siler	6-8	4-6	8	2	2	37	16
Fletcher	0-0	0-1	0	0	0	1	0
White	2-2	2-2	0	0	0	5	6
M. Jett	5-11	0-1	2	2	1	30	10
Ladner	1-1	0-2	0	0	0	1	2
Keys	2-2	2-4	1	0	0	7	6
Williams	6-15	1-2	9	3	4	34	13
S. Jett	0-0	0-1	1	0	0	1	0
Simmons	2-5	0-0	9	1	0	30	4
Hamilton	2-2	2-3	4	2	1	16	6
Crowley	0-0	0-1	1	1	0	1	0
Totals	32-58	13-28	43	17	11	200	77

Halftime score: So. Miss. 39, FSU 29;
 Fouled out: Mabry and Shaffer (FSU); Total
 fouls: FSU — 29, So. Miss. — 20;
 Attendance: 5483.