

# Metro hhhh so close

## Memphis State finishes off FSU 90-86 in overtime

By Gerald Ensley  
Democrat staff writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Fate played the prankster one more time against the Florida State Seminoles, crushing their hopes with one elusive bounce of the basketball.

Memphis State won the 1985 Metro Conference championship by beating the Seminoles 90-86 in overtime Saturday. History will note that Memphis State, the nation's fifth-ranked team with a 27-3 record, won its third Metro championship and automatic NCAA bid by beating a 14-16 FSU squad that was seeded seventh in the conference and not expected even to reach the finals.

But as any member of the Freedom Hall crowd of 11,501 or a national television audience would attest, FSU's unexpected reach for an NCAA tournament berth ended with a ball that could not be grasped — not with a team that couldn't be beaten.

The ball in question bounced off the Memphis State basket with six seconds remaining in regulation time and FSU ahead 76-74. It had been shot on a driving layup by Tiger point guard Andre Turner but bounded away. Hanging in the air — FSU's future hovering with it — the ball was touched but not grabbed by FSU freshman forward Jerome Fitchett. Instead, Turner continued down the baseline past the leaping Fitchett, snatched the ball as it bounced and fired up another shot.

That shot, too, refused to fall. But on the other side of the rim, Tiger forward Baskerville Holmes rose up and pushed the ball into the basket with three seconds remaining.

That basket tied the score, 76-76. Following a futile courtlong shot by FSU guard Joe Farrar, there came a five-minute overtime, the first overtime in a Metro final.

But FSU, having fired all its guns in the first 40 minutes, was through.

Five seconds into the overtime, 7-foot Tiger center William Bedford scored on an alley-oop pass from Turner, was fouled, and sank a free throw for a three-point Memphis State lead. Try as it might, FSU got no closer than those three points the remaining 4:55.

"It all boiled down to us being one rebound away from the playoffs. In the overtime, they just outplayed us," said FSU head coach Joe Williams. "But in no way do I want to let the disappointment of losing spoil the great performance of our players. It was a gutty effort that got us where we were."

Such encouragement was little comfort in a somber, teary-eyed FSU lockerroom. The scene underscored this ill-fated season in which FSU lost four

games at the buzzer and struggled through a nine-game losing streak.

"I feel a great emptiness as far as basketball is concerned," said FSU guard Dean Shaffer. "We're as good as any team in the nation right now. I hate to end the season."

Shaffer — whose never-quit hustle, passing and 47 points in three games (a career-high 24 on Saturday) earned him the tournament's most valuable player award — tried to take the blame for Saturday's loss. With 52 seconds to play, and FSU ahead by two points, Shaffer had missed the first shot of a one-and-one free throw situation.

"I thought the turning point was when I missed the front end of that one-and-one," said the senior, who lost his tournament record for assists when Turner passed for 12 Saturday to edge Shaffer 27-26. "That was what lost it for us."

No one player lost it for FSU. But many players helped FSU almost win it.

FSU center Al Gipson, who joined Shaffer on the all-tournament team, scored a game-high 26 points. That total gave Gipson the new tournament record of 81 points in three games. Point guard Farrar matched his career high with 18 points, 12 of them in the second half. Senior Maurice Myrick, playing in his record-setting 117th game for FSU, had six points, eight assists, a steal and two crucial blocked shots before fouling out with 31 seconds left in regulation.

"We definitely felt we could beat them," said Myrick, wiping away tears. "That was a very tough loss."

Playing in their first Metro final since 1980, the Seminoles came out playing with the same patience they displayed in the first two games of the tournament. Led by Shaffer, Gipson and Farrar, the Seminoles jumped to a 10-4 lead with 15:36 to play in the first half. FSU held its lead for another four minutes, before a baseline jumper by Vincent Askew gave Memphis State its first lead at 17-16 with 11:35 to go in the half.

With Holmes on fire from the outside — he scored 18 of his team-high 24 points in the first half — the Tigers threw a 10-1 run at FSU, and led 27-17 with 7:46 left in the half. The Tigers, who shot 58 percent in the half, kept the lead the rest of the half, taking a 41-36 lead at intermission despite the fact that FSU shot an equally torrid 59 percent for the half.

And for the first five minutes of the second half, it seemed that Memphis State would continue to lead. With Lee warming up, en route to 19 points before fouling out with 1:21 in regulation, the Tigers still owned a double-digit lead (50-40) with 15:20 remaining.

Then came the first of two rather heroic rallies by FSU.

Around a Turner jumper, FSU sandwiched two Gipson free throws, a basket apiece by Shaffer and Myrick, and a Gipson jumper. Memphis State led by four points, 52-48, with 12:10 to play.

It was then that Gipson suffered the second of two attacks of stomach cramps. He could not go down court on defense, and Memphis State scored twice before FSU could call a timeout and remove him from the game.

Gipson had left the court for only about a minute of playing time early in the second half, but this time he was forced to retire to the lockerroom for 3:50 of playing time. Memphis State took advantage of Gipson's absence to move to its largest lead, an 11-point margin of 62-51 with exactly eight minutes remaining.

FSU came charging again, and had whittled the lead to seven points when Gipson re-entered the game with 6:45 to play. Gipson responded with two baskets in his first two minutes of play. But more crucial was the shooting of Farrar, who banged home four baskets in a two-minute stretch that saw FSU draw to within two points on three occasions.

Finally, with 4:09 to play in regulation, FSU drew even with the Tigers, as Gipson scored on a baseline jumper to tie the score 67-67. That basket gave Gipson 17 points and broke Lee's year-old tournament record of 71 total points.

Myrick then made one of the biggest plays of the game, blocking Askew's attempted jumper and passing the ball to Shaffer, who drove in for a layup and was fouled. Shaffer missed the free throw but FSU led 69-67.

Two Lee free throws tied the score before Gipson, who played the entire tournament with great poise, muscled in a bank shot, was fouled and sank the free throw for a three-point FSU lead.

Lee soon followed by sinking

one of two free throws to cut FSU's margin to two points. On the next trip down court, Shaffer was fouled by Lee - his fifth - and sank both free throws for a four-point lead, 74-70, with 1:21 to play.

Memphis State brought the ball upcourt and called timeout.

"I knew anything could still happen," said Farrar. "I didn't feel comfortable with that lead."

What did happen was that Askew scored on a jumper with 1:04 to play, cutting the FSU lead to 74-72. John Wilfong then fouled Shaffer with 52 seconds to play, and Shaffer missed the free throw.

Down court raced Memphis State, with Askew again taking the shot, and again making it. Fouled by Myrick - his fifth - Askew missed the free throw.

FSU brought the ball upcourt, where Farrar was fouled by Wilfong and went to the line for a one-and-one. Farrar - after a Memphis State timeout and a pause of his own at halfcourt - sank both free throws with 20 seconds to play.

Downcourt came Memphis State, where, after a couple of passes, Turner initiated the final, crucial play of regulation.

"I saw an open path to the basket, and I went for it. I just put the ball up too hard against the glass," said Turner. "I kept on running, and the ball just kind of came loose on the other side. I put it back up, and luckily Baskerville was there on the other side to tip it in."

That delighted Memphis State and its fans, who made up the bulk of the crowd.

"The smallest guy got the biggest rebound," said Memphis State coach Dana Kirk.

## Safely Holmes

### FLORIDA STATE 86

Player	min	fg	fga	ft	fta	reb	a	pf	tp
Farrar.....	44	8	12	2	2	2	5	4	18
Fitchett.....	45	2	3	2	3	7	3	0	6
Myrick.....	40	2	9	2	3	4	8	5	6
Shaffer.....	44	11	17	2	4	4	5	5	24
Gipson.....	39	11	19	4	5	8	2	3	26
Speights.....	12	2	3	0	0	5	2	3	4
Mabry.....	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Team.....						1			
<b>Totals .....</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>86</b>

### MEMPHIS STATE 90

Player	min	fg	fga	ft	fta	reb	a	pf	tp
Lee.....	31	7	16	5	6	8	3	5	19
Holmes.....	45	11	13	2	2	10	1	3	24
Bedford.....	35	6	10	2	6	6	1	4	14
Turner.....	40	5	10	1	2	2	12	1	11
Askew.....	39	5	7	4	8	4	5	0	14
Boyd.....	7	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2
Becton.....	19	3	4	0	0	3	1	1	6
Wilfong.....	9	0	2	0	0	1	1	2	0
Team.....						1			
<b>Totals .....</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>90</b>

Halftime — Memphis State 41, Florida State 36. Regulation: Memphis State 76, Florida State 76. Shooting percentages — Florida State 57.8, Memphis State 59.4. Errors — Florida State 12, Memphis State 9.  
Attendance — 11,501.