

Seminoles run Rams out of NIT

Offense keeps blazing with fourth straight 100-pointer at home

By David Whitley
Democrat staff writer

It wasn't a question of who. The question was how many.

How many points would Florida State score before finishing with Rhode Island on Thursday night? For a while, it seemed like the score was headed for territory usually inhabited only by NBA teams or Nevada-Las Vegas.

It ended up a rather routine 107-92 win for the Seminoles. The fact that scoring 107 points can be considered routine is a testament to the way FSU has been pouring down points at home lately.

It was the fourth-straight 100-point home game for the Seminoles, who are 14-2 at the Civic Center this season. Thursday's win was just another impressive notch in FSU's smoking gun.

"They were on fire tonight," said Rhode Island coach Tom Penders. "They're an excellent basketball team when they get cooking."

The win improves FSU's overall record to 19-10 and moves the Seminoles into the second round of the National Invitation Tournament. The Rams finished their season 20-10.

"We don't want to go home yet," said guard Pee Wee Barber. "It's not time."

The time may not come for a while if the Seminoles keep playing teams who like to run. The Rams do, and they did a pretty good job of it. But one thing FSU has proven over the past few weeks is that it can score points with just about anybody.

"It certainly plays into our strongest suit when they run," said coach Pat Kennedy.

The pace was scorching from the start, and Rhode Island stayed with the Seminoles for a half. FSU screeched to a 17-3 run to open the second half, and the only question after that was how far over the 100-point barrier the Seminoles would land.

They had 90 points with 10 minutes left, then they hit a lull as Barber went to the bench. The 100th point came with 1:31 left when George McCloud put back an offensive rebound.

That was kind of fitting considering the way FSU owned the inside against the Rams. Randy Allen had 23 points and 11 rebounds, and he got plenty of rebounding help from his teammates.

Barber added 22 points, and Jerome Fitchett had 16. Forward Kenny Green had 26 points and 13 rebound to lead the Rams.

The Rams' biggest lead was 9-6; then LaRae Davis started to find the mark from 3-point range. He hit two straight bombs to give FSU a 16-15 lead with 14:42 left in the half.

Raleigh Choice got the crowd into the game a minute later when he stole the ball and loped down-court for a dunk to make it 22-17. Rhode Island's backcourt kept the Rams from falling too far behind. Tom Garrick and Carlton Owens combined for 10 straight points to give them a 33-32 lead with 9:49 left.

Barber then got into the act, scoring 14 of FSU's final 18 points as the Seminoles took a 58-47 lead at intermission.

The way the points were going down, that lead was barely comfortable for the Seminoles, much less safe. It got comfy in a real hurry at the start of the second half.

"We kept telling them that our destiny was in our own hands. Let's not let thing die, and go out and play well," said Kennedy."

Rhode Island couldn't make a shot and FSU couldn't seem to miss. Sparked by a couple of Fitchett dunks, the Seminoles scorched the Rams 17-3 over the first six minutes of the half.

The largest lead was 88-62 with 10:24 left. The Rams eventually worked the lead down to 98-82 with 2:58 left, but all that did was make

the final a little bit more respectable."

FSU's second-round opponent won't be known until today or Saturday, but Penders said it may not really matter.

"If they play as well against anybody in the next round as they did tonight, they're going to win," he said. "They could have beaten anybody tonight."

Florida State 107
Rhode Island. . . . 92

RHODE ISLAND (92)

Owens 7-23 4-5 20, Garrick 8-17 2-4 19, Colson 0-0 0-0 0, K. Green 9-23 8-10 26, Evans 4-11 4-7 16, Blevin 4-5 0-0 10, Christian 0-0 0-0 0, Scotti 0-0 0-0 0, Tabisz 0-0 0-0 0, A. Green 0-1 1-2 1. Totals 34-80 19-18 92.

FLORIDA ST. (107)

Barber 8-9 4-5 22, Davis 3-7 3-4 13, Choice 5-7 0-0 10, Fitchett 6-10 3-3 16, Allen 9-14 5-6 23, McCloud 4-9 1-4 9, Karasek 3-8 0-0 6, Hunter 2-4 2-3 6, Masteer 0-2 1-2 1, Carter 1-1 0-0 2, MacPhee 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 41-73 19-27 107.

Halftime—Florida St. 58, Rhode Island 47. 3-point goals—Rhode Island 5-12 (Owens 2-6, Blevin 2-3, Garrick 1-2, Green 0-1), Florida St. 6-12 (Davis 3-5, Barber 2-3, Fitchett 1-2, McCloud 0-1, Masteer 0-1). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Rhode Island 46 (Green 13, Evans 11), Florida State 48 (Allen 11). Assists—Rhode Island 11 (Green 3), Florida St. 13 (Davis 5). Total fouls—Rhode Island 24, Florida St. 22. A—5,159.