

By PAT HOGAN

Special To The Democrat

GASTONIA, N. C.— The blue chips will be down for Florida State's high-riding Seminoles tonight when they face an old nemesis in a new setting.

Florida State, the University of Florida collide at 8:30 to see which Sunshine State entry in the NCAA's District 3 baseball playoffs will enter Saturday's final round with a spotless tournament record.

It can't turn out like it did in first-round action last night, when Danny Liebhiller's Seminoles notched their 13th straight victory, 3-1, over George Washington, and Florida outlasted Clemson, 8-6. Come midnight tonight, either FSU or Florida will have tasted defeat.

George Washington and Clemson battle at 8 p.m. with one to be in the double elimination affair. Carrying Seminole hopes will be righthander Frank Blusser, the well-rested senior who hasn't lost a game. He's 8-0 for the season.

Florida, owner of two regular-season bids over FSU, is expected to counter with Tallahassee's Donnie McCrary, who was due in on a morning plane from Gainesville, or Ray Oestricher, who got off a plane last night just in time to put out a late Clemson fire.

Oestricher was rushed in after Clemson had cut an 8-3 Florida bulge down to two runs. It ended that way as Oestricher wasted no time getting his feet on the ground.

The Seminoles had a tougher time than anticipated with a surprisingly strong George Washington club. But the Seminoles didn't really need many runs behind senior lefthander Jack Bristol. Pitching one of his best games, the Sharon, Conn. lefthander fanned 14 Colonials,

including the last nine outs from the seventh through the ninth. Hard-luck "Bris" lost his shut-out in the eighth on a two-out throwing error.

Bristol has now given up only two earned runs in his last 50 innings of toil, and ran his strikeout reading to 74 for 77 innings this season. His won-lost record is 6-2.

Even with Bristol's superb ef-

fort, it took a two-out looping triple by second baseman Ray Bazzell to shove across FSU's deciding two runs in the sixth.

Rightfielder Mike Copps led FSU's eight-hit attack on GW's George Bickerton with two singles and a double. They finally got Copps out in the eighth, when Colonial shortstop Sam Knisley made a diving stab of Copp's smash behind second.

All-American shortstop Dick Howser pulled off two sharp fielding plays and Bazzell drew cheers from the crowd of 2,500 when he turned a sure-fire hit into a routine out in the sixth.

Copps had quite a night. Besides his three straight hits, he scored two of FSU's three runs and stole three of the six bases the Seminoles swiped. Ex-

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cept for their eighth-inning lapse, the Seminoles played flawless ball afield.

A double play stifled a first-inning Seminole threat, but Copps' single to left, his first stolen base and Dale Koch's shot past third produced a run in the second.

Copps and Koch teamed up again in the sixth to set the Copps doubled on deep left-center — his third straight hit — and moved up on Koch's infield hit. Then, with two out, Ray Bazzell fumped a triple along the rightfield line for two big runs.

Bristol, who had worked out of a seventh-inning jam by fanning two Colonials in a row, lost his shutout in the eighth. But it wasn't his fault.

Gino D'Ambrosio beat out a chopper and moved to third when centerfield Jerry Couch juggled George Bickerton's single through the box. With two down, Dale Koch's wide throw to first on Sam Knisley's bouncer allowed D'Ambrosio to score.

Florida moved to an early five-run lead against Clemson, largely on walks and errors. Clemson fought back the same way, and in a final splurge scored three runs in the seventh inning with-

out a hit.

Clemson committed seven errors—catcher Butch Coker four—and the Tigers' four pitchers walked 10 men.

Florida's three pitchers walked nine men, and the Gators committed four errors. Sid Smith, who has a 5-1 record, was the winner. Perry McGriff had two hits, one a triple, for Florida.

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