

FSU wins; hopes ride on Metro

By BOB BLANKENSHIP

Executive sports editor

It wasn't anything nearly as dramatic as John Paul Jones' declaration of "we have just begun to fight", but Florida State baseball Coach Woody Woodward has declared that the Seminoles' season is "just beginning."

That was his very first reaction after the Seminoles outlasted Georgia Southern 10-9 at sun splashed Seminole Field Sunday afternoon to end their regular season with a 33-12 record.

"Our season is just beginning," insists Woodward, looking ahead to the start of the Metro Conference tournament in Memphis on Friday.

At stake will be a meager NCAA post-season berth, nothing as dramatic as national independence, but something that figures to be even more elusive for the Seminoles.

Pitching, which figures to be a key in the double-elimination Metro showdown, never showed up Sunday for the Seminoles, who had three members of the staff get belted around for 13 hits.

"It wasn't very pleasing," admitted Woodward. "It wasn't one of the better parts of our game today. But, I'm not worried. We'd started to get good pitching, and I'm not going to let one game worry me."

PART OF Woodward's "no concern" obviously stems from the confidence he has in the Seminole bats, which came to the rescue again Sunday, ripping four home runs in a 12-hit attack.

Coupled with two Georgia Southern homers, the two teams tied a Seminole Field record of six in a game that had been set just three weeks ago when Miami played here.

Ben Curry, the Godby High product, smashed two, his second and third of the season; Terry Kennedy hit his sixth and David Mobley slugged one that proved to be the game's winning blow in the eighth inning.

Still it took a bit of indecision on the part of Georgia Southern base running to let the Seminoles get away with the victory that gave them a 4-1 edge in the five-game season series with the Eagles.

The Eagles, who wound up having two base runners thrown out at the plate for the day, missed a chance to tie the game in the top of the ninth when catcher Gerald Hynko was tagged out at home, failing to score from second on a double off the centerfield wall after hanging around the bag to watch the bouncing ball. The next man popped up to end the game with runners on second and third.

The Eagles had scored on Carl Gardner's leadoff homer in the inning to divide a two-run Seminole cushion built on Mobley's two-run homer in the eighth.

MOBLEY'S dramatic winning blow was his eighth of the season and the Seminoles' 55th in 45 games, but still 10 short of the team's season record set last season.

The pitching benefactor of the Seminole bats was Jackie Smith, who, for the second day in a row, picked up the mound victory in relief against the Eagles, lifting his season record to 4-2. He worked the final inning and a third, giving up the one run and two hits after starter Mike Bretz and Larry Jones had been cuffed around by the Eagles.

Bretz was touched for nine hits and six runs in the first five innings before Jones came on to retire the first eight men he faced before losing his touch on a muggy day.

Both were blessed with leads provided by the Seminole bats, which went to work right from the beginning on a two-run homer by Kennedy in the first. Two more came on Mobley's two-run single and a run-producing infield check-swing single by Mark Coulter in the third.

Curry hit solo homers in the fourth and sixth innings and Carlos Lezcano, who went three-for-four on the day, drove in another with a single in the fifth.

IT ALL KEPT the Seminoles just one jump ahead of the Eagles, who kept pecking away with a two-run single and two-run homer by Steve Rum to hang close until they tied it in the eighth at 8-8 on Mark Strocher's single and Chris Nixon's double.

Mobley untied it in the next inning, and, as it turned out, it saddled Georgia Southern with its 23rd loss in 59 game. The Eagles have four games remaining, without any hope for post-season playoffs.

Any Seminole hopes will ride with the Metro tournament that opens Friday.

"I don't know a thing about the other Metro teams at this time," said Woodward, who indicated that it would be the next order of business.

| FLORIDA STATE | | | | | GA. SOUTHERN | | | | |
|---------------|----|---|---|----|--------------|----|---|---|----|
| | ab | r | h | bi | | ab | r | h | bi |
| Bifano 2b | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Rum lf | 4 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Lezcano cf | 4 | 3 | 3 | 0 | Crego 2b | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Hicks dh | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | Gardner cf | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Kennedy c | 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 | Hynko c | 4 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| Coulter lf | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | Mathews 3b | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| McArdle ph | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | Ch'dress rf | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Mobley 3b | 4 | 1 | 3 | 4 | Mixon ss | 4 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Benda ss | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Strocher lb | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Curry lb | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | Nixon dh | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Alex rf | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | Givens p | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Huff rf | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | Leisure p | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bretz p | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | | |
| Jones p | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | | |
| Smith p | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | | |

TOTALS 32 10 12 0 TOTALS 33 9 13 9
Ga. Southern 002 031 021-9
Florida State 203 111 02x-10

E-Hynko, Mathews, Bifano, Mobley. DP-Georgia Southern. LOB-Georgia Southern 8, FSU 1. 2b-Mixon 2, Nixon. HR-Rum (4), Gardner (5), Kennedy (6), Mobley (8), Curry 2 (3). SB-Lezcano 3. S - Nixon. SF-Nixon.

| | IP | H | R | ER | BB | SO |
|------------------|-------|----|---|----|----|----|
| Givens | 5 2/3 | 10 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 1 |
| Leisure (L, 1-1) | 2 1/3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Bretz | 5 | 9 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 2 |
| Jones | 2 2/3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Smith (W, 4-2) | 1 1/3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

WP-Bretz 2, Jones. T-2:34. A-820.