

FSU overtakes Mercer

By BOB COHN

Democrat sports writer

Facing what looked to be a certain defeat and an end to their 30-game winning streak at home, Florida State's Seminoles scored seven runs in the bottom of the ninth inning to defeat Mercer University 12-11 Wednesday at Seminole Field.

Centerfielder Mark Gilbert, the FSU catalyst all season, belted a bases-loaded double with two out to score the winning runs.

And so, The Team That Won't Quit

had once again pulled one out of the fire. But certainly not in this year, nor probably any year in recent memory, had an FSU baseball comeback been more dramatic.

"I've heard about other pro or college games that have been like this," said coach Woody Woodward, "but I've never been involved in one."

If ever the Seminoles were supposed to lose, this was the time. Trailing 11-5 going into the bottom of the last inning, FSU had given no reason to lead anyone to believe it could win it.

"We were playing like a bunch of goats," said Woodward.

THERE'S A blunt appraisal for you. But the Seminoles, dragging along, were probably a bit flat after Tuesday's doubleheader with Florida, Woodward said.

Though the Seminoles (39-12) broke to a 2-0 first-inning edge, Mercer shot back with three in the second and three in the third to take the lead it wouldn't lose until the ninth.

Poor pitching, sloppy fielding, and a generally lackadaisical look kept the Seminoles' effort as bleak as the gloomy day, which threatened rain at any moment.

Early in the game, it was the weather that represented the Seminoles' biggest hope. With FSU playing so poorly, it seemed that a rainout would be the only escape as the Seminoles fell behind amid rain-

drops and occasional lightning bolts.

But it never did come down hard enough, and the game went on — to the ultimate delight of the Seminoles and what was left of the announced crowd of 204 (counting a few pigeons circling the field).

KEN FISCHER, the freshman lefthander, got his first start of the season, but lasted just to the third inning. He was charged with six runs, as Mercer tried to add to its 32 wins, hoping to gain a bid to the NCAA tournament.

Fischer was followed to the mound by Greg Jones, Joe Nichols, Kevin Brooks and Brad Long.

Long pitched just one inning, the ninth, but that was enough to give him his third win of the season.

Some heads were turned when Long walked out to pitch the final frame: He hadn't been used since March 17. But he held the Bears off while his teammates plotted their last-ditch assault.

The other Seminole bright spots prior to the ninth were leftfielder Ronnie Traylor and third baseman David Mobley, who each hit home runs.

Mobley, back in his own personal hitting grounds after a hitless Florida series, had three safeties in the game.

HERE IS how the ninth went:

Mercer pitcher Walt Prestwood, who came in for starter Dan Fitzsim-

mons in the fifth after Traylor's two-run homer made it 7-5, Mercer, had checked the Seminoles on two hits.

Gilbert, the first batter, singled. So did shortstop Bob Benda and second baseman Craig Patterson. That loaded the bases.

Prestwood then heaved a wild pitch, scoring Gilbert. 11-6. Mobley's single brought Benda in, and it was 11-7. Traylor followed with a dribbler down the first-base line. Prestwood fielded it and tagged Traylor out while Patterson scored to make it 11-8.

With Mobley on second, catcher Blane McDonald ripped a shot up the middle that centerfielder Bud Turner juggled. Mobley scored on the error. 11-9.

First baseman Don Milner forced McDonald at second for the second out. DH Kevin Rigby next hit a grounder that shortstop Skeeter Sommers bobbled, and runners were on first and second.

With Ken Huff running for Rigby, Bruce Huff (Ken's brother) fouled off a bunt. Woodward then put Brooks Carey in to hit for Huff, and the pitcher responded with a single, loading the bases.

Ken Schimchak ran for Carey at first, and Gilbert, up for the second time in the inning, hit a shot over Shaw Maddox' head in left, and all three runs scored.

AB R H BI					AB R H BI				
Florida St					Mercer				
Gilbert cf	6	2	3	3	Sommers ss	5	2	2	0
Benda ss	5	1	1	0	Copeland 2b	5	1	2	0
Patterson 2b	5	1	1	0	Selph cf	2	0	1	1
Mobley 3b	4	4	3	2	Turner cf	4	3	1	0
Traylor lf	4	1	2	3	Welch dh	5	2	3	1
McDonald c	5	0	2	0	Sterritt 3b	2	1	1	0
Milner 1b	5	1	0	0	Engle rf	3	1	1	3
Rigby dh	4	0	2	0	Hallam 1b	5	1	2	3
K.Huff pr	0	1	0	0	Maddox lf	4	0	1	1
B.Huff rf	4	0	1	1	Byrum c	5	0	0	0
Carey ph	1	0	1	0	Totals	39	11	15	9
Schimchak pr	0	1	0	0	Florida St				
Totals	40	12	15	9					

Mercer 033 012 020 — 11

Florida St 200 120 007 — 12

E — Mobley, Huff, Benda, Sterritt, Hallam, Sommers 2, Turner. DP — Mercer 1, FSU 2. LOB — Mercer 11, FSU 7. 2B — Gilbert 2, Hallam, Engle. HR — Mobley, Traylor. S — Copeland. SB — Gilbert.

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Fitzsimmons	4 ² / ₃	7	5	4	1	3
Prestwood (L, 6-2)	4	8	7	5	0	0
Fischer	2	5	6	5	1	0
Jones	3 ¹ / ₃	5	3	3	2	3
Nichols	3 ¹ / ₃	4	2	2	0	0
Brooks	¹ / ₃	0	0	0	0	0
Long (W, 3-0)	1	1	0	0	1	0

WP — Fischer. Prestwood. A — 204.