

FSU holds off Mercer 7-5

By BOB COHN
Democrat sports writer

Seminole Field, the site of Mercer University's nightmare with Florida State last year, was almost the forum for a bit of table-turning Saturday.

But a Mercer ninth-inning rally fell short with the tying runs on base as Florida State won a 7-5 decision over the Bears.

Last year, playing at FSU, Mercer took an 11-5 lead into the bottom of the ninth. The Seminoles had a 31-game home win streak that appeared over. But they rallied for seven runs to rescue the game, 12-11, and the streak.

"I've been involved in 2700 games in my career," Mercer Coach Barry Meyers recalled before Saturday's contest, "and that was the most bitter loss I can remember. But that's baseball. And that's last year."

This year was almost a repeat, with the roles reversed. Florida State broke out to a 7-1 lead after six innings. Mercer added a run in the eighth, and entered the final frame trailing, 7-2.

Ken Smith, a freshman walk-on doing the pitching for FSU, got the first out, but surrendered a walk, single and wild pitch before striking out Gary Parker for the second out.

Greg Pugh singled home Tim Hallam, Frank Millerd walked and Skeeter Sommers rammed a 1-2 pitch into center for a two-run single to make the score 7-5 with runners on first and third. Was poetic justice about to happen?

No. Smith, a 6-foot-3 righthander, got Bud Turner to fly to Mike Fuentes in center as the Seminoles sweated out their third victory without a loss in the young season.

Smith was in the game because FSU Coach Dick Howser was taking a look at his pitching staff with the game apparently sewn up.

Jim Riley started and turned in six effective innings before his right arm tightened up. The senior from Atlanta allowed just one run and two hits, and did not allow a safety until Tom Campbell singled with two out in the fifth.

Rick Hatcher and John Wolfer, two junior college transfers Howser must count on, followed Riley to the mound. Hatcher pitched a scoreless seventh and Wolfer was touched for the eighth-inning run, before Howser went to Smith.

Riley, the staff leader in earned run average (2.94) last season, displayed a sharp curve that kept Mercer's hitters consistently off-balance.

"I had excellent location with my pitches," Riley said. "I couldn't have asked that my curve be any better. I was setting up the hitters good. I felt strong."

Riley said he started to weaken in the sixth, when he gave up his only run. Mercer loaded the bases with none out, but Riley got Turner to ground into a double-play which scored Pugh, and then struck out Phil Welch.

The Seminoles, meanwhile, were playing longball off Mercer (4-2) starter and loser Dan Fitzsimmons, a junior who started last year's game.

After Ken Schimchak led off with a bunt single, short-stop Don DeLoach, the sophomore from Leon High, lined a Fitzsimmons pitch over the leftfield wall to give FSU a 2-0 lead. It was DeLoach's first homer as a Seminole.

FSU added two more runs in the fifth on an infield out by Ronnie Traylor and Jeff Ledbetter's pop fly, which three Mercer players watched drop in short center.

The crowning blow was struck in the sixth, when first baseman Don "Meatloaf" Milner whacked a home run with Schimchak and Craig Patterson on base to give the Seminoles a 7-1 lead at the time.

MERCER					FLORIDA STATE				
	AB	R	H	BI		AB	R	H	BI
Millerd lf	3	0	1	0	Schimchak rf	4	2	2	0
Sommers 3b	5	0	2	2	DeLoach ss	5	1	2	2
Turner cf	4	0	0	1	Patterson 2b	4	1	0	0
Sterritt 3b	4	0	0	0	Milner 1b	4	2	2	3
Welch 2b	4	0	0	0	Fuentes cf	5	1	3	0
Hallam 1b	3	1	0	0	Mobley 3b	4	0	2	0
Campbell c	4	1	3	0	Traylor lf	3	0	0	1
Jedneski dh	2	0	0	0	Gagnon lf	0	0	0	0
Mahoney ph	1	0	0	0	Ledbetter dh	4	0	1	1
Parker ph	1	0	0	0	Ramsey c	4	0	1	0
Pugh lf	1	3	1	1	Totals	37	7	13	7
Totals	32	5	7	4					

Mercer 000 001 013 — 5
Florida State 200 023 00x — 7

E — Sommers, Welch, Fitzsimmons. 2B — Millerd, Fuentes, Mobley. 3B — Ramsey, DeLoach. HR — DeLoach, Milner. SF — Turner. SB — Schimchak. LOB — Mercer 8, FSU 12. DP — Mercer 2, FSU 1.

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Fitzsimmons (L, 0-1)	5 1/3	11	7	7	4	4
Buschman	2/3	1	0	0	1	0
Stone	1	1	0	0	0	0
Barnhouse	1	0	0	0	0	2
Riley (W, 1-0)	6	2	1	1	2	4
Hatcher	1	1	0	0	0	2
Wolfer	1	1	1	1	1	2
Smith	1	3	3	3	2	1

WP — Buschman, Smith. HBP — Pugh (by Riley). A — 1,124. U — Rosa, Bafts.