

FSU's Gray proves a point with Clemson

By RICK ROBB

Democrat executive sports editor

Moments after nailing down the final out Sunday, Florida State pitcher Jeff Gray paid a visit to Clemson coach Bill Wilhelm.

"I had to shake his hand," Gray said.

Gray, who had just pitched five strong innings in Florida State's 11-7 victory at Seminole Field, wanted to remind Wilhelm that he was the pitcher who "wasn't even worth looking at" as a senior at Miami Southridge High.

"When I was being recruited out of high school, Clemson was where I wanted to go," Gray said. "Coach Wilhelm was the first to recruit me. But after a while, he said I wasn't even worth looking at, that he wasn't interested anymore.

"It wasn't a professional way to do things. I was hurt, and I started questioning myself. But it just gave me more incentive to try hard."

Gray had all the incentive he needed Sunday. When he entered the game with none out in the fifth inning, the Seminoles were leading 8-6 but Clemson had the tying runs on base.

Gray promptly set down the Tigers in order without allowing a ball out of the infield. He retired the side in the sixth, faltered slightly in the seventh by giving up three hits and a run, then set down the last six batters to earn his first collegiate victory.

The triumph was made sweeter by his postgame visit to Wilhelm.

"He wasn't in a very good mood," Gray said.

Wilhelm had a slightly different version of his dealings with Gray.

"His statement that he wanted to go to Clemson is not factually accurate," Wilhelm said. "We had a place for him if he wanted to come here.

"We had some correspondence with him. Some friends of ours in Miami were checking him out for us, and they were not encouraged about his chances of being a college pitcher. So we didn't pursue the matter anymore."

Gray, a freshman right-hander, supplied just about the only pitching in the game. For the second straight day, the Seminoles and Tigers knocked the ball all over the park, combining for 24 hits and five home runs.

Lionel Martinez and Mike Fuentes tagged three-run homers for the Seminoles, who extended their winning streak to six games after a season-opening doubleheader loss to Georgia Southern.

Clemson's Frank Russ, who didn't hit a homer during the entire 1980 season, belted solo shots in his first two at-bats, and teammate Craig Roberson had another.

"It was another hitter's day," said FSU coach Mike Martin, who sweated through a 9-8 victory on Saturday. "There were some routine fly balls that blew out. But it was well-played, and we made no drastic errors."

Clemson, 2-4, jumped on starter Clem Freeman right away when leadoff hitter Russ knocked a 3-1 pitch over the right-field wall. The Tigers built a 4-1 lead before Fuentes tied the score with his three-run blast to right in the third inning.

After Russ' two-run double staked Clemson to a 6-4 lead, Martinez's three-run homer to right-center highlighted a four-run fourth inning that pushed the Seminoles ahead to stay.

While FSU padded the lead with a run in the sixth and two in the eighth, Gray finally solved the Tigers' bats.

"I was told in the bullpen that they were hitting breaking stuff," Gray said. "I'm basically a breaking-ball pitcher, but I had my heater going and I was throwing it more than normal."

Don DeLoach had four of FSU's 12 hits as the Seminoles continued to flex their offensive muscle. In eight games, they have accumulated 84 runs, 84 hits and 12 home runs.

"Doesn't surprise me," said Martin. "But don't let anyone sell our pitching short. That's the second day in a row we're gotten a good job out of a middle reliever."

The Seminoles hit the road this week, meeting Jacksonville University Tuesday and Wednesday before heading to Miami for a three-game weekend series against the top-ranked Hurricanes.

CLEMSON					FLORIDA STATE				
	ab	r	h	bi		ab	r	h	bi
Russ 2b	5	2	3	4	Martinez 2b	5	4	2	3
Fulton lf	3	1	1	0	DeLoach ss	4	1	4	2
Wilson cf	1	0	0	0	Fuentes cf	5	1	1	1
Brier dh	5	0	1	0	Ledbetter lb	4	0	0	1
Gallagher rf	4	0	1	1	Licata lf	5	0	2	0
Paulling lb	5	1	2	0	Ystrzmski rf	5	1	1	0
LeMaster c	3	0	0	0	Cawthon dh	2	1	0	0
Van Dyke c	1	0	1	1	Barineau dh	1	0	0	0
Roberson 3b	4	2	3	1	Figueredo 3b	4	0	0	0
Powers ss	3	0	0	0	Ramsey c	3	3	2	1
Sexton cf	2	1	0	0					
Mahoney lf	2	0	0	0					
Totals	38	7	12	7	Totals	38	11	12	10

Clemson	112	200	100	—	7
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Florida State	103	401	02x	- 11
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E — Gallagher 2, Roberson, Key, Yastrzemski. DP — Clemson 1. LOB — Clemson 7, Florida State 7. 2B — Yastrzemski, Russ, Brier, Paulling, Roberson. HR — Russ 2, Roberson, Martinez, Fuentes. SF — Gallagher.

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Clemson						
Key (L, 1-1)	6	8	9	9	3	0
Mallon	2	4	2	0	0	2
Florida State						
Freeman	4	9	6	6	2	2
Gray (W, 1-0)	5	3	1	1	0	2

WP — Key. HBP — by Key (Ledbetter).
PB — Van Dyke. T — 2:58. A — 1,679.