

Seminoles open with 7-0 victory

By George Maselli
Democrat staff writer

The rain stayed away during Florida State's victorious baseball opener Tuesday afternoon, but a Sherlock Holmes mist threw a gray shroud over the occasion.

The recent drippy weather forced the game to be moved from sodden Seminole Stadium to Florida High's convenient and dry field a few hundred yards away. Game time was moved up to 3 p.m. because the high school field has no lights. And if all that wasn't enough to dampen the proceedings, NAIA Armstrong State came into town playing ball like Arizona State.

But when FSU starter Doug Little hummed his last fastball of the day across the plate, the Seminoles had begun 1985 with a 7-0 victory that they hope is the first of 65 or so this season. Both teams were impressive and surprisingly sharp afield. FSU played error-free ball.

The teams are scheduled for another game today at 3:30 p.m. at Seminole Stadium, but if damp weather persists, the game will again be changed to 3 p.m. at Florida High.

"It was a good opener, but we didn't figure Armstrong State to be like this," said FSU Coach Mike Martin. "Their pitcher came out here and was throwing like it was late April."

The Pirates' pitcher was right-hander Chuck Christopher, who showed some fastballs but got most of FSU's big hitters out with off-speed breaking balls. He matched the heralded Little evenly through three innings.

"I had really good stuff today, maybe the best I've ever had," said Christopher, a transfer to the Savannah, Ga. school. "I wasn't sure I could pitch in big-time college and I think I learned some things. I didn't expect to come in here and play them so close."

Little, who allowed just five hits, walked only one and fanned nine. He was aided thrice by defensive plays that one does not normally expect this early in a season. In the third, freshman catcher Ed Fulton gunned down a potential base-stealer with one out. He showed a lot of arm on the throw and was appreciated by a good-sized crowd that was undeterred by the weather.

In the fourth, a perfect relay from Frank Fazzini to Jose Marzan to Fulton cut down Kevin Stafford at the plate to keep the Pirates off the scoreboard. In the fifth, after a lead-off bunt single by Bill Fortner, the double-play combination of Luis Alicea and Benji Figueroa turned one to end another threat.

"I'll tell you how good my teammates are," said Little, beaming after his shutout. "Luis and Benji are going to be exciting to watch this year. When they turned that double play, that got me out of it."

Little, who confessed to a concentration lapse in the middle innings, allowed only two more baserunners after the double play.

But Christopher began fighting for his life. He, too, was aided by superb defense. At least until the sixth.

Alicea, who had two hits and drove another that was hauled in at the fence, led off the sixth with a single. On a 3-2 pitch, Alicea broke for second and Fazzini bounced back to the pitcher.

Christopher gambled and went to second. In confusion over who would cover the bag, the throw sailed into center field with short-stop Lindsae Frick getting the error. Then center fielder Fortner threw to the wrong base, allowing Fazzini to go to second. Sorrento drew a walk to load the bases.

But Christopher came back to fan Jimmy Jones on a changeup curve. Then Vince Calandra bounced hard to third. Kevin Brown threw to second for an apparent force out, and after a bobble, second baseman Ken Williams threw Calandra out at first.

As Sorrento began to trot to the dugout after the play at second, his teammates and coaches screamed at him to go back. Umpire Jerry Whitmore had ruled that Williams straddled the bag and never touched it, allowing a run to score. Christopher got Marzan to bounce out, but the Pirates were deprived of the lift that would have come with escaping the bases loaded jam unharmed.

"Yes sir, I did," said Williams when asked if he touched the bag.

"I figured something like that would happen on the road," said Christopher. "That was a double play."

"It obviously hurt us," said Armstrong Coach Joe Roberts. "I was proud we handled it as well as we did. But it's the first time in 400 ball games I've had that called for or against us. It was a bad call.

With Christopher running out of gas, the Seminoles scored five times in the fifth against two relievers. Four walks set the stage. Alicea and Jones had run-scoring hits, and Calandra had a sacrifice fly.

Little, who expected to pitch only five innings, kept things quiet the rest of the way. He didn't mind the extra work, what with a shutout and all.

Armstrong State					Florida State				
ab r h bi					ab r h bi				
Bertagnolli,dh	2	0	0	0	Alicea,2b	5	2	2	1
Jackson,ph	1	0	0	0	Fazzini,lf	2	1	0	0
Stafford,rf	2	0	0	0	Kosco,lf	0	0	0	0
Lamb,ph	1	0	0	0	Sorrento,rf	2	1	0	1
Brown,3b	3	0	0	0	Jones,1b	4	0	1	2
Byers,pr	0	0	0	0	Calandra,dh	3	0	1	2
Scott,lf	4	0	1	0	Marzan,3b	4	1	1	0
Williams,2b	3	0	1	0	Figueroa,ss	3	1	1	0
Fortner,c	3	0	1	0	Fulton,c	2	1	0	0
Broad,1b	3	0	0	0	Blackwell,c	1	0	0	0
Frick,ss	3	0	1	0	Mangham,cf	3	0	2	0
Culberson,cf	3	0	1	0	Zoeller,ph	1	0	0	0
Totals	28	0	5	0	Kidd,cf	0	0	0	0

Totals 30 7 8 6

Armstrong State 000 000 000 — 0 5 2

Florida State 000 001 51x — 7 8 0

E—Frick, Brown. DP—Armstrong St. 1, Florida St. 1. LOB—Armstrong St. 3, Florida St. 6. S—Bertagnolli. SF—Calandra.

		IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Florida State							
Little (1-0)		9	5	0	0	1	9
Armstrong State							
Christopher (0-1)		6	4	2	1	3	2
Zakraisek	1/3	1	3	3	2	0	
Demerssemen	2/3	3	2	1	1	0	
Coleman	1	0	0	0	0	0	

HBP—Brown by Little. T—2:26. A—552.