FSU's Lewis roughs up Bulls

By George Maselli Democrat staff writer

Freshman Richie Lewis comes from the tough side of Muncie, Indiana. Maybe that's why the Florida State pitcher didn't find it too tough to move uptown to big-time college baseball Saturday.

Lewis' sparkling relief effort, a revived hitting attack and some allstar defense led the Seminoles to a 11-5 victory over the South Florida Bulls.

A noisy crowd of 2,031 sat in chilled sunshine to watch the Seminoles come back from a 4-1 deficit to win going away with a five-run

sixth inning.

FSU, ranked No. 5 by Baseball America, is 3-0; South Florida, 1-1, is ranked No. 19 by the same publication. The two teams play again today at 2.

Despite the contributions of many of his teammates - Bien Figueroa's defense at short, three hits each by Frank Fazzini and Eric Mangham, and two-run homers by Vince Calandra and Jimmy Jones – the 5-foot-9 Lewis stood tallest.

Often accused last summer and fall of being cocky by older teammates, Lewis showed some of that on the mound. His curve ball looked positively big league as he struck out 10 and allowed only five hits and one run in 7½ innings.

"A freshman is supposed to hide in the corner," said Lewis. "Because I didn't shy off, people thought I was cocky. A lot of my success comes from a certain natural cockiness. I'm not trying to be a hot dog."

He felt his strong right arm could help FSU immediately, and

he was obviously right.

"Why wait? Why wait till your sophomore year?" said Lewis, who credited older teammate Kevin Smith with helping him along. Lewis was needed badly on this day. South Florida's hitters pounded FSU starter Ray Revak for five hits and four runs in less than two innings. Lewis entered and struggled with control of his fastball, so he relied on the big curve ball. South Florida's right-handed hitters kept falling out of their shoes when his sweeping curve ball bit hard and broke across the plate.

When his hard stuff began finding the plate in the fifth inning, he was untouchable. The Bulls' last hit came leading off the fifth.

"Richie Lewis was obviously the story today," said FSU Coach Mike Martin. "He was not intimidated at all."

The Seminole offense hunted and pecked for single runs in the first four innings. South Florida Coach Robin Roberts' big mistake was leaving relief pitcher Randy

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Wilson in for his lumps.

Wilson entered in the fourth inning after left-handed starter Scott Berry struggled from the start. Wilson, a right-hander, was apparently what Seminole bats had been looking for. In the fifth, he served up a run-scoring double to Mangham, who was 3 for 3 with two RBIs. The ball was misplayed near the fence by right fielder Tom Kriebel.

In the sixth, Wilson served up a two-run homer to Vince Calandra over the right-field fence, a fence FSU batters missed while playing their first two games at Florida High. Paul Sorrento followed with a single and Jones hit a towering shot over the center-field wall to make it 10-5. Mangham brought home the final run with a double.

"It's scary from a coaching standpoint, but there's nothing like playing in this stadium," said Martin.

With all the offense, it would be easy to overlook the infield defense. But in the top of the fourth with two on and two out, Figueroa ranged far to his left to throw out Allen Swabek. In the top of the fifth, with the Bulls still leading 5-4 and the bases full with two outs, Figueroa made a diving stop and flip to second to end the inning and save two runs.

He drew a standing ovation from the local fans who appreciate a defensive play or sacrifice bunt almost as much as a home run.

The Seminoles made no errors. South Florida was charged with two errors and botched two other plays that helped FSU in its comeback. The kind of talent the pitching staff and infield has shown so far seemed to make Martin uncomfortable.

Mention PSU baseball and you're likely to hear Omaha — site of the College World Series — in the same breath. Martin was trying to tone down such optimism so early in the season.

"We've got to low-key it," said Martin. "We've got 64 ballgames to play. We can be excited about the way we played today, but there's a long way to go."

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