Ninth-inning error beats FSU

By George Maselli

GAINESVILLE - Mike Martin was ready to check into a rest home.

"I can't take it," the Florida State baseball coach said angrily. "That is six one-run ballgames."

Losing a superb, taut game on a routine error in the bottom of the ninth inning, the Seminoles fell to the Florida Gators 3-2 Friday night. As the frustrated Martin could not forget, it was the Seminoles' sixth one-run loss of the season

FSU is 23-9; Florida is 20-5. The teams play again here today at 1:30.

This one was nearly as galling as the loss in Miami

in which FSU blew a four-run lead in the ninth and lost in the 10th. It came against intense rival Florida, for one thing. Good teams do not lose consistently in close games, for another.

There was no good reason for it, either. That's what had Martin trying to tear apart a bench in the Perry Field dugout after the game.

What made Martin so irritated was a simple mixup in communications between center fielder Eric Mangham and right fielder Keith Kidd in the ninth.

With the score tied at 2, FSU reliever Ray Revak induced Tim Touma to lift a lazy fly to right-center. Both outfielders converged on it. Neither caught it. Touma wound up at second with none out.
"We both could have caught it. We both called for

it," said Mangham in the deathly silence in the dugout after a Martin tirade.
"I wish I knew," said Martin when asked what

happened on the play. "It was a routine fly ball. The play's got to be made."

When given that break, the Gators took the game. It had been tied 2-2 since the fifth inning, thanks to strong pitching performances from FSU starter Doug Little and Florida's Scott Ruskin.

"We played Santa Claus, but the University of Florida did a great job of executing," Martin said. Jose Alou sacrificed Touma to third, after the misplayed fly ball, against Richie Lewis, who was called in

to take over for Revak. See BASEBALL, 4D

Then Lewis faced Florida backup catcher Andre Weihs, a banjo .175 hitter. Martin went to the mound and discussed the possibility of a squeeze bunt.

Florida disguised its intent perfectly as Weihs took two fastballs outside, pitches that would have been most difficult to bunt.

"With the count 2-0, I figured they'd pitch out with first base open," said Weihs. "Coach told me if they did pitch out to throw my bat at it, but it was right down the (middle)

Touma did not tip the play by breaking too soon from third, which would have resulted in an FSU pitchout. Weihs didn't panic and dropped a bunt at charging first baseman Jimmy Jones, who had no play at the plate.

In many ways, the Seminoles had played so well. Freshman catcher Barry Blackwell helped avert a big Florida first inning when Little struggled with his control - when he gunned down Scott Lusader trying to steal.

Florida pushed across one run. But the Seminoles answered back in the second inning to tie it. They answered noisily.

Despite a strong wind blowing in from left field, Vince Calandra hammered one over the 400-foot sign in center to tie it at 1-1.

That impressive show of power was squared in the fourth when Tommy Zoeller hit a bolt through the same wind and over the same wall to make it 2-1.

They really swing the bats," said Florida starter Scott Ruskin, who struck out eight and walked seven. "You throw them a fastball waist high, kiss it goodbye.

"That's a tough way to lose a game," said Florida Coach Joe Arnold. "Fortunately, it wasn't us. It could be us tomorrow. You never know.

Florida St.					Florida				
ab r h bi				ab r h bi					
Alicea,2b	3	0	1	0	Lusader,rf	3	0	1	0
Figueroa,ss	3	0	0	0	Lmbrdzzi,ss	2	1	0	1
Fazzini,If	4	0	0	0	Stanley, 1b	3	0	0	0
Zoeller, 1b	3	1	1	1	Ruskin,p	2	0	0	0
Jones, 1b	0	0	0	0	Martinez,cf	4	0	2	1
Calandra, dh	3	1	1	1	Clemo,3b	4	0	1	0
Marzan,3b	4	0	1	0	Touma,2b	4	1	1	0
Kidd,rf	4	0	1	0	Alou,If	3	1	1	0
Blackwell,c	4	0	1	0	Floyd,c	2	0	0	0
Mangham,c	1	0	0	0	Rosenberg,ph	1	0	0	0
Totals	29	2	6	2	Weihs,c	0	0	0	1
					Totals 2	28	3	6	3

Florida St. Florida	7,57	0 000 -	262
E-Marzan, Kid FSU 1, Florida 1. L	OB-FSU	8, Flo	rida 8.
HR—Calandra (6), Mangham, Ruskin, Alou, Weihs, Calan	Martine	. SH-	-Floyd,

		IP	н	R	ER	BB	50
Florida	St.						
Little		72/3	6	2	2	5	3
Revak,	L(0-3)	1/3	0	-1	0	0	1
Lewis		Va	0	0	0	0	0
Florida							
Ruskin,	W(4-1)	9	6	2	2	7	8