

It's deja vu for FSU

'Noles escape losers' bracket to win Metro

By George Maselli
Democrat staff writer

For the second straight year, the Seminoles did not take the direct route. These guys apparently enjoy the magical mystery tour.

When relief sensation Richie Lewis fired his last fastball Sunday, Florida State had beaten Virginia Tech 3-1 under the broiling sun and then South Carolina 11-5 under the lights to win the Metro Conference Baseball championship. The triumph from the depths of the losers' bracket gave the Seminoles an automatic bid into the NCAA playoffs.

FSU, 55-20, won the tournament for the third straight year and sixth time in seven years. South Carolina, 40-20, left town in frustration, having lost twice to the Seminoles when one victory would have meant the title. The Gamecocks lost to FSU the same way last year.

The list of Seminole heroes on this day was a long one. You'd have to start with Lewis, the freshman, who pitched 5½ innings of relief — two overpowering innings against Virginia Tech and 3½ against South Carolina. He struck out 10, allowed just three hits, one run and got a save in each game. He was named tournament most valuable player, a worthy award considering that he had beaten South Carolina with another overpowering relief effort Saturday night to keep the Seminoles alive.

The delirious crowd of 4,176 chanted his name and stomped its feet as he struck out the last South Carolina batter: "Richie, Richie, Richie."

"My stomach was about as tight as it's ever been," said FSU coach Mike Martin, who deserved a share of the hero's role for setting in motion an intimidating running game

that produced six steals in the title game.

Martin also called a gutty bases-loaded pickoff play at second base in the eighth inning that ended South Carolina's last chance. The tying run was at the plate with South Carolina's top slugger, Joe Datin, at bat.

"We felt good right there. Richie was struggling and we had our best hitter up. That killed us," said South Carolina coach June Raines.

"It was just like sticking a pin in and letting all the pressure out," said Martin of the play that Lewis and shortstop Bien Figueroa timed perfectly after a signal from catcher Ed Fulton.

FSU players said they played the second game on mostly emotion, or "pure adrenalin," as Lewis described it.

"I was exhausted," said Frank Fazzini, who had a most spectacular tournament, including two home runs and a straight steal of home plate Sunday. "But I reached back for a little extra, and there it was."

Fazzini, the junior from Belleville, N.J., was the standout in the first game. He hit a game-winning two-run home run in the first inning. Then in the title game, he set the tone against South Carolina ace pitcher Mike Cook, who came into the game with a 13-1 record and a 1.45 ERA.

Fazzini doubled to bring in Luis

Alicea with the first run in the opening inning. He advanced to third on a ground out, and stole home as Cook went through his deliberate windup.

To add a little more luster to the performance, Fazzini hit a massive solo home run in the sixth inning, his 30th of the season.

The list goes on. There was Doug Little, who pitched seven superb innings on just two days rest to beat Virginia Tech. His record is now 14-2.

Little outdueled Virginia Tech ace Bean Stringfellow, an all-name team left-hander. Stringfellow was simply brilliant, but made a high changeup mistake to Fazzini in the first inning that gave FSU a 2-0 lead.

Little said his hero of the day was trainer Tad George, who got Little's overworked body into pitching shape. Like we said, a lot of heroes.

Then there was senior first baseman Jimmy Jones, who hammered two home runs against the Gamecocks. The first one, a two-run job, provided the game-winning runs. The second one, his 17th, was FSU's 132nd homer of the season, breaking the NCAA single-season team record held by the 1982 Seminoles of Jeff Ledbetter and Co.

One could not forget sophomore left-hander Ray Revak, who came into the title game with FSU trailing 4-3 in the top of the third. All he did was stifle the Gamecocks for 3½ innings, allow just two hits, strike out six and set a perfect table for Lewis. Revak, 3-3, got the victory.

After Little's impressive opening performance, Martin was just about out of pitching. Mike Loynd was unavailable with a back injury. Kevin Smith had started the night before. Martin took the gamble of starting Al Ashmont, a strong-armed freshman who has struggled mightily most of the season.

He struggled in the first as the Gamecocks touched him for a solo homer by Rob Rinehart and two singles. Then Martin called on the weary Smith. He got out of first inning trouble, but got nailed for back-to-back homers by Lewis Jenkins and Riley Polk (South Carolina's eighth and ninth hitters) to give the Gamecocks the lead at 4-3 in the second inning.

But from there, Revak and Lewis and Fazzini and Jones took the game under their own wings.

"I'm sure proud," said Lewis of his MVP award. "A lot of the guys deserved this as much as I did. It was a team-oriented win."

The hard way.

Florida St.					Virginia Tech				
	ab	r	h	bi		ab	r	h	bi
Alicea, 2b	4	1	1	0	Buheller, if	4	0	0	0
Figueroa, ss	3	0	0	0	Sullivan, rf	4	0	1	0
Fazzini, if	4	1	1	2	Plante, 3b	4	0	0	0
Sorrento, rf	4	0	0	0	Canale, lb	4	1	2	1
Calandra, 3b	2	1	0	0	Apee, dh	4	0	1	0

Jones, lb	3	0	1	0	Boyle, c	4	0	0	0
Zoeller, dh	3	0	1	0	Basse, if	3	0	1	0
Blackwell, c	3	0	0	0	Mance, 2b	3	0	0	0
Mangham, cf	3	0	1	1	Henderson, ss	3	0	0	0
Totals	29	3	5	3	Totals	33	1	5	1

Florida St.	200	000	100	—	3	5	1
Virginia Tech	000	100	000	—	1	5	1

E—Plante, Calandra. DP—Va. Tech 3. LOB—FSU 5, Va. Tech 5. 2B—Zoeller. HR—Fazzini (29), Canale (26). SB—Calandra. SH—Zoeller.

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Florida St.						
Little, W(14-2)	7	5	1	1	0	2
Lewis, S(3)	2	0	0	0	0	4
Virginia Tech						
Stringfellow, L(10-3)	9	5	3	2	5	9

WP—Lewis. T—2:22.

Championship game

S. Carolina					Florida State				
	ab	r	h	bi		ab	r	h	bi
Barns, ss	5	0	1	1	Alicea, 2b	3	1	1	1
Rinehart, if	3	1	1	1	Figueroa, ss	4	0	0	0
Datin, lb	3	0	0	0	Fazzini, if	4	2	2	2
Aldrich, dh	3	0	1	0	Sorrento, rf	5	1	0	0
Lendinski, dh	2	0	0	0	Jones, lb	3	4	3	3

Mackie, cf	5	0	2	0	Fulton, c	4	2	2	1
Killian, rf	4	1	1	0	Calandra, 3b	3	0	1	0
Churchich, c	2	1	1	0	Kosco, dh	4	0	0	0
Nelson, c	1	0	0	0	Eppley, ph	1	0	1	2
Carter, ph	1	0	0	0	Paceffi, pr	0	0	0	0
Lambert, c	0	0	0	0	Mangham, cf	5	1	2	1
L. Jenkins, 3b	2	1	1	2					
Hollins, 3b	1	0	1	0					
Polk, 2b	4	1	2	1					
Totals	36	5	11	5	Totals	36	11	12	10

S. Carolina	130	000	010	—	5	11	0
Florida St.	303	012	02x	—	11	12	0

DP—FSU 1. LOB—S.C. 10, FSU 10. 2B—Fazzini. HR—Rinehart (12), Jenkins (12), Polk (4), Jones 2 (17), Fazzini (30). SB—Fazzini, Jones, Mangham 2, Figueroa, Alicea.

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
S. Carolina						
Cook, L(13-2)	5	8	8	7	6	4
G.Jenkins	3	4	3	3	2	5
Florida St.						
Ashmont	2½	3	1	1	0	1
Smith	1½	3	3	3	1	1
Revak, W(3-3)	3½	2	0	0	2	6
Lewis, S(4)	3½	3	1	1	2	6

WP—Ashmont, Cook, Revak, Lewis 2. PB—Churchich 2. HBP—Fulton (Cook), Killian (Lewis). T—3:12. A—4,176.