Early FSU runs are a Little cushion in 9-3 victory

By David Lee Simmons

Five runs can do wonders for a pitcher having a rough time.

So it went for Florida State senior Doug Little, who despite a slow recovery from the flu was able to beat Florida International 9-3 on a sunny Saturday before 2,213 at Seminole Stadium.

The victory improved FSU's record to 15-2, and the Sunblazers fell to 9-8. After struggling in the first inning, Little went to the dugout and watched his teammates build a 5-0 lead in the bottom of the first.

That was a boost for Little, who recovered to keep Florida International in check to the ninth.

"I knew we had a lead, but I try to

After the first inning he (Doug Little) put on a pitching clinic . . After we gave him the lead, he pitched the way it's supposed to be pitched. - FSU coach Mike Martin

keep the score 0-0 in the back of my mind," said Little, 3-0. "I'm still a little ill from the flu. I don't feel like I'm exerting myself. At times I feel like I'm going through the motions out there."

He may have been, but the motions were good enough to shut down a Sunblazer offense that hardly met a first pitch it didn't like, allowing Little to get ahead on the batters. He struck out just one, but kept the ball low, rarely offering a fat pitch. That translated into nine Sunblazer hits and only one walk.

"The only thing that got me through today was the fact that I only threw about 80 pitches, which is the lowest of the season," said Little. "FIU is a freeswinging team. They helped me out a lot by going after the first pitch."

by going after the first pitch." "You could see he's (Little) not at 100 percent," said FSU coach Mike Martin. "But after the first inning he put on a pitching clinic on spotting the ball. After we gave him the lead, he pitched the way it's supposed to be pitched."

Neither Martin nor Little is certain why Little is still affected by the flu, which he picked up two weeks ago. Mar-

tin did indicate that Little may not be eating properly.

"The key when you're sick is your diet. We've talked to Doug and hope he's keeping it up," said Martin. "He's still probably a week away from where he wants to be."

In the first inning, Little allowed a hit, made a bad throw to first on a pickoff attempt and then walked a batter.

But Little got out of the inning without a run, and the the Seminoles quickly hammered away at Sunblazer starter Doug Ellis, who had even more problems than Little finding the strike zone. Fooling nobody, Ellis gave up four straight singles, the last one a pop fly by Ed Fulton that left fielder David Taylor lost

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in the sun. That scored Luis Alicea from third.

Ellis walked Figueroa home, and Craig Saxner scored Fulton with a single. Then, with Barry Blackwell at the plate, Sunblazer catcher Nelson Caraballo let a pitch get by, scoring Sorrento. After Ellis loaded the bases again by walking Blackwell, Eric Mangham scored Zoeller on a sacrifice fly.

It was 5-0, and Ellis was gone. FSU scored against reliever Larry Hall in the third, fourth, sixth and seventh. The last run was a solo homer by Fulton over the right field Screened Porch, his

fourth home run of the year.

The Sunblazers scored in the seventh on an RBI single by Sal Farradas, and then got two more in the ninth when Little started to lose his composure. But with two out and two on, Little forced Gil Alfonso to hit a grounder back to the pitcher's mound, which Little grabbed and threw to first to end the game.

The two teams face each other again today at 1 p.m. at Seminole Stadium. Right-hander Richie Lewis (4-0) will start for FSU. Florida International will go with righthander Albert Garcia (1-2).

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