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FSU sweeps to title

By George Maselli Democrat staff writer

Chris Pollack said he didn't have a thing. For the first time in a while, Ed Fulton had a lot.

Pollack simply threw a one-hit, 6-0 shutout in the first game, and Fulton homered and doubled in a 6-5 victory in the second as Florida State swept a pair of seven-inning games from Memphis State on Saturday night at Seminole Stadium.

A crowd of 3,113 watched the top-ranked Seminoles (45-8, 14-3) clinch the Metro Conference regular-season title. That gives FSU a first-round bye in the Metro Tournament that begins here May 8. But the Tigers (27-12, 8-4) kept it interesting.

Pollack, 8-2, was almost the whole story in the first game, unless you happen to appreciate guys who mash the ball instead of guys who paint the corners of the plate. Pollack was touched for a two-out single in the fourth by Wayne Thompson. He also was generous enough to provide one walk. That was it offensively for Memphis State in the first game.

A junior left-hander, Pollack struck out seven, most of them on a side-armed curveball that he insisted was his only pitch that was

working.

"I didn't feel I had good stuff at all," said Pollack. "I came into the dugout and told Coach (Mike) McLeod that I didn't have anything. He told me to go out and dominate with what I had." Sounds simple. But with the constant offensive production from the Seminoles, pitching becomes a process of waiting for runs. In the first game, the wait lasted until the fourth inning. Then FSU put two runs up for three straight innings. Paul Sorrento was the big bopper. He hit his team-leading 14th homer in the fourth, then said what the heck and drilled his 15th in the sixth. The man has been a one-man slugging highlight film the past few weeks.

The other important hitter in the opener was the continually surprising Chad McClellan, who ripped a two-run single in the fifth.

The second game saw the rebirth of Fulton, the good-natured catcher who had some big hitting

games earlier this season but more recently has had a protracted slump to deal with. He said a lot of work in the batting cage and the switch from a 32 to a 30-ounce bat may be what turned the trick for him.

"I've been struggling for about a month," said Fulton with a smile. "I've been fighting it since Jan. 7, 1966, the day I was born."

It was apparently worth all the effort. He lifted his 13th homer over the Screened Porch in right in the fourth. That was big because it began the Seminoles' comeback from a 4-2 deficit. Memphis State had rallied for three runs in the top of the inning against a struggling Richie Lewis. A double by Chris Marable and a two-run homer by Jeff Acuff put the Seminoles in a two-run hole.

But the Seminoles have quickly answered opponents' big innings all season. Fulton's homer got that going. By the time the fourth was over, FSU was back on top 5-4.

But Lewis, who incredibly struggled but struck out 12 in seven innings, was touched for a run in the fifth. David Moss' triple eluded Steve Taddeo in left and an infield bouncer tied the game at 5.

But then Fulton lined a double in the bottom of the inning that brought home pinch-runner Keith Kidd with the game-winning run in the bottom of the fifth inning.

"I feel pretty good after having all those 0-for-3s and 1-for-3s to go 3 for 4," he said. "This is a big boost, but earlier when I had a couple of big games and tried to get

outside myself and hit the long ball. I can't do that."

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