Sorrento's homer in bottom of ninth gives FSU 6-4 win

Florida State's dream season continues.

The first rain in months? No problem. It stops a convenient two hours before game time. A late LSU rally? Walk-on Ed Porcelli does an early Bruce Sutter impression. Need some drama to end a 3½-hour game? Paul Sorrento delivers.

Sorrento lined a two-run, twoout home run in the ninth inning as top-ranked Florida State beat second-ranked LSU 6-4 Monday night with a national television audience watching and a packed house rocking Seminole Stadium.

"I just feel this is the year for us," said Porcelli, who was cut by South Florida before walking on at FSU. "It's been just incredible for the team. For me, it's been a dream season."

Monday night fit with the way the season has gone for rolling Florida State, 54-11. Earlier in the day it was announced that the Seminoles would host a four-team regional tournament, just what Coach Mike Martin wanted.

But in the more immediate realm, what the 4,364 fans (incidentally, dreamily, setting a school record for season attendance at 106,221) who turned out wanted to see was a good Seminole show for the nation.

The problem was, that there were cross purposes from the start of this dream match, setup by ESPN. Strategy dictated a tuneup for the playoffs that begin Thursday and lead to the College World Series. But a big home crowd, the

rankings and a national television audience called for a play-to-thedeath approach.

The Seminoles stayed with their plan to give their top five pitchers — not including Porcelli — work and it almost cost them. Steve Kovensky was hammered for a tworun homer by Greg Faulkner in the top of the ninth to tie the game. Porcelli, who figured as nothing but a mop-up man this season, retired all three men he faced with two on to save the 4-4 tie.

"Coach (pitching coach Mike) McLeod told us that we were all going to get to pitch and I called my parents and friends back home and told them," said Porcelli. "Then I found out I wasn't going to pitch and was pretty disappointed. Even when Coach Mac told me to warmup in the ninth, I didn't think I'd get in."

Following Mike Loynd, Doug Little, Chris Pollack and Richie Lewis to the mound, Porcelli wound up in the spotlight and with the victory. He is now 3-0.

Sorrento made it all possible with his 20th homer against LSU relief ace Barry Manuel, who had not allowed a home run in 63 innings this season. It was a missile shot that barely screamed over the 30-foot screen in right.

"I knew he was a power hitter and I said to myself keep it low or outside," said Manuel, 9-2. "I had it low. He just muscled it out."

"I thought I hit it off the screen," said Sorrento. "It wasn't that high. That's why I jumped out of the box."

Early in the game, there wasn't much except good pitching by both teams, a lot of skidding about in the wet outfield and some shaky play by LSU.

The Seminoles had little trouble before the ninth, other than tough Tiger pitching of Mark Guthrie and Gregg Patterson. They made one error, and that was when Sorrento slipped on slick turf.

The first inning was marked with a classic case of National-TV Nerves. The Tigers were especially

Mike Loynd walked leadoff batter Mike Papajohn. He tried to steal second but was out when he inexplicably tried to take the base standing up and was tagged out. It saved FSU a run because Jeff Reboulet followed by tripling off the fence in center.

Loynd stranded him there on an infield out and flyout.

LSU was not through yet with the early shakes. Sorrento walked with one out and Luis Alicea followed with a bloop single. With runners at first and third, Bien Figueroa tapped to first. First baseman Jim Bowie stepped on the bag for one out, but with Alicea hung up between first and second, Bowie threw the ball away allowing Sorrento to score.

The Tigers came back to tie it at 1 on a bad-hop single against Little in the fourth inning. Both teams shuttled through pitchers getting ready for the playoffs that begin

Thursday.

If only briefly, LSU took the lead 2-1 in the fifth against Pollack. Joey Belle singled in the run, but Pollack worked out of further trouble.

The Seminoles kept the pressure on. They put together two-out singles by Barry Blackwell, Greg Clayborne and a bad-hopper by Jose Marzan.

They scored the go-ahead runs in the sixth, again with LSU's help. Figueroa walked with one out and scored when Eric Mangham popped a double to right. The Tigers mishandled a relay that would have left Figueroa dead at the plate. As an added bonus, pitcher Patterson deflected a ground ball away from his shortstop, allowing Mangham to

Lewis entered for the seventh and eighth. That's when the cross purposes came in. Normally, a coach would never remove a pitcher throwing as well as Lewis was.

But this game was different. In the end, however, it was the same for hot FSU and Sorrento.

"Top of the world," he said. "Top of the world."

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Kovensky	0	2	2	2	1	0	1
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