From the Tallahassee Democrat May 19, 1996 Page 41

FSU makes ACC final

By Steve Ellis DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER DURHAM, N.C.

The most difficult task facing Scooby Morgan on Saturday night was convincing pitching coach Jamey Shouppe he was ready to pitch for the third time in six days.

Once that battle was won, winning the second one seemed like a breeze.

Morgan, in the first complete nine-inning game of his career, helped FSU to an 8-2 victory over Virginia before 3,370 at Durham Bulls Athletic Park.

The victory means FSU — which stayed alive in the double-elimination tournament earlier Saturday with a 2-1 victory over Clemson — will play Virginia again today at 1:30 p.m. for a shot at its second consecutive ACC Tournament title.

"Coach Shouppe asked me eight times, 'Are you all right?' And each time I told him I was fine," Morgan said. "I really want this. I'm happy for myself."

Shouppe was glad he turned to Morgan, arguably the Seminoles' most valuable player in the tournament, to silence the surprising Cavaliers on just two days' rest. "He had a phenomenal game,"
Shouppe said. "What a great way
for him to end his ACC career. I
told him this was not the time to be
a hero but said he could go."

Morgan (10-3) picked up his third win in six days, including two in the ACC Tournament. It was his first career complete game. Morgan also has produced a home run and five RBIs as a designated hitter. He is believed to be only the third Seminole ever hit 10 homers and earn 10 wins in a season. Chris Roberts and and Jeff Ledbetter accomplished the feat.

Since losing to Virginia on Thursday, FSU won three straight to keep its title hopes alive. The Seminoles must now beat the Cavaliers' ace, Seth Greisinger (10-2). A victory today likely would secure FSU a No. 1 seed in an NCAA Regional this week.

Martin is not sure who he will pitch but it won't be Morgan, who has thrown 318 pitches in the past six days.

Morgan got into trouble in the first two innings but escaped with just one Cavalier run before E.J. Anderson's homer made it 2-2 in the fifth inning. Anderson beat FSU on Thursday with a double.

After that, Morgan allowed just two hits, and got all the help he needed as the Seminoles exploited Virginia's depleted pitching staff for six runs down the stretch. Virginia gave up 10 walks Saturday night.

Geoff Sprague and Brooks Badeaux produced RBI hits for a 42 PSU lead in the fifth inning. PSU doubled its score an inning later on a two-run triple by Steve Nedeau, Scott Zech's RBI single and a passed ball.

In the earlier game, FSU solved Clemson's pitching and its own bullpen problems to finally defeat the Tigers.

Reliever Chris Chavez, with crucial help from Chuck Howell, pitched the Seminoles past Clemson before 3,187. Chavez, refusing to wilt under 100-degree temperatures, two-hit Clemson after relieving Mike Davis in the fourth. Then Howell, with three pitches, got FSU out of a ninth-inning jam.

Howell, a former Leon pitcher, entered with runners on second and third with two outs and a 3-0 count against Kurt Bultmann inherited from Chavez.

Howell, who complained of soreness after lasting just 1½ innings against Virginia on Thursday, got Bultmann to ground out to Zech.

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