

# Florida State outlasts Liberty

*The top-seeded Seminoles defeat the sixth-seeded Flames 10-7 in a home run derby in the first round of the NCAA Regional.*

By Steve Ellis  
DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER

Florida State bucked Thursday's upsetting trend by doing the expected.

The No. 1-seeded Seminoles slugged their way past stubborn Liberty 10-7 to become the only top-three seed to win its opening game in the NCAA Atlantic II Regionals at Dick Howser Stadium.

No. 2 Auburn and No. 3 Delaware lost to lesser seeds in earlier action Thursday.

Sixth-seed Liberty and FSU turned the schools' first-ever meet-

ing into a home run derby that had the 2,843 fans both jumping to their feet and holding their breath.

The game featured six home runs and 26 hits.

The Seminoles (50-18) will play No. 3 seed Delaware today at 3 p.m. The Fightin' Blue Hens lost to No. 4 Oklahoma 6-3 on Thursday. Chris Chavez (7-4, 4.78 ERA) will face Delaware senior RHP Chris Frey (8-1, 4.13 ERA) as FSU tries to remain undefeated in the double-elimination tournament.

"I don't remember playing in a regional with this many strong teams," FSU coach Mike Martin said. "Usually there's one team that you look out there and say, 'Man, I can't wait to get a shot at them.' (This time) I've been impressed with every single one of them."

By defeating Liberty, FSU avoided meeting Auburn — a 17-15 loser to Rutgers — today in the

## ATLANTIC II REGIONAL

### Thursday's results

- Oklahoma 6, Delaware 3
- Rutgers 17, Auburn 15
- FSU 10, Liberty 7

### Today's games

- Liberty vs. Auburn, 11 a.m.
- FSU vs. Delaware, 3 p.m.
- Rutgers vs. Oklahoma, 7 p.m.

losers' bracket. The Liberty-Auburn game will begin second-day action at 11 a.m.

Homers by outfielders Matt Diaz and Brian Cox put FSU ahead 4-0 after three innings.

The Flames (32-28) then took their cuts at Howser Stadium's inviting dimensions. Shortstop David Dalton and first baseman Ryan McClellan answered with homers in the fourth inning off starter Jon

McDonald (10-3). That trimmed the lead to 4-3 before Diaz ripped his 16th homer, a two-run hit that put FSU ahead 6-3 an inning later.

The next display of power would belong to Liberty. With his team trailing 9-3 in the eighth inning, Steve Wright put a grand slam over the treetops beyond the right centerfield wall. It was one of 10 hits McDonald (10-3) gave up.

FSU added a solo run in the bottom of the eighth.

Wright's homer was easily the most impressive but Diaz's two homers were the difference. His 16 homers are just one shy of the FSU record for freshmen, held by J.D. Drew, Paul Sorrento and Frank Fazzini.

Diaz continued his impressive postseason hitting. He had a record 14 hits in the ACC Tournament and added three more on Thursday

Please see FSU, 6C

## FSU: Seminoles squandered opportunities

From 1C

night. Jose Zabala also had three hits on Thursday.

"It was good to help the team win and that was the most important thing, to win the first game," Diaz said. "The postseason is always tough. The stakes are a little more and the focus is a little more and it's just a lot of fun."

Nearly lost in FSU's victory was an accomplishment that didn't seem likely before the season. FSU reached the 50-win mark for the 17th time in 19 years since 1980. FSU had not won 50 games in a season before 1980.

Florida State . . . . . 10  
Liberty . . . . . 7

LU (32-28)					FSU (50-18)				
ab	r	h	bi		ab	r	h	bi	
Miller, B. lf	4	1	2	0	Badeaux 2b	4	1	1	0
Benham, J. 3b	5	1	1	0	Zabala 3b	4	2	3	0
Dalton ss	4	2	3	1	Cox cf	5	1	3	3
Wright rf	4	1	2	4	Salazar c	3	1	0	0
Benham, D. c	3	1	1	0	Henderson dh	3	2	2	1
McClellan 1b	3	1	2	2	Diaz rf	4	3	3	3
Byler dh	4	0	0	0	Cash 1b	4	0	1	1
Barker 2b	2	0	0	0	Jernigan lf	4	0	1	0
Miller, T. ph	1	0	0	0	Groves ss	4	0	1	0
Brown 2b	0	0	0	0	McDonald p	0	0	0	0
Sullenger ph	1	0	0	0	Proctor p	0	0	0	0
Strong cf	3	0	0	0					
Bailey ph	1	0	0	0					
Harrell, T. p	0	0	0	0					
Harrell, B. p	0	0	0	0					
<b>Totals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>

LU 000 300 045—7  
FSU 013 021 21x—10

E—Dalton (15), Harrell (3), Miller (9), DP—FSU 2, LOB—LU 4, FSU 6, 2B—Henderson 2(6), Zabala (16), HR—Dalton (10), McClellan (12), Wright (18), Cox (15), Diaz (16), CS—Jernigan 2(8), SH—McClellan (2), Badeaux (4).

		IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
LU							
Harrell, T. L	9-4	7	13	9	8	3	6
Harrell, B.		1	2	1	1	0	1
FSU							
McDonald W	10-3	8	10	7	7	2	6
Proctor		1	1	0	0	0	1
WP—Harrell (13), BK—McDonald (4), HBP—by Harrell (Zabala), U—Parquette, Yeast, Bureson, Pacheco, T—2:12, A—2,843.							

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McDonald W. 10-3	8	10	7	7	2	6
Proctor	1	1	0	0	0	1

WP—Harrell (13). BK—McDonald (4).  
HBP—by Harrell (Zabala). U—Parquette.  
Yeast, Burleson, Pacheco. T—2:12. A—2:43.