

FSU is Omaha-bound

The Seminoles are going to their 16th College World Series after a 16-10 win over Auburn on Sunday.

By Steve Ellis
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"See you in Omaha."

The sweetest words Mike Martin knows never sounded better than they did on Sunday.

This Florida State team, supposedly a year away from being good enough to make the College World Series again, is going back. This season. This week.

FSU flexed its new-found muscle to humble yet another Atlantic II Regional opponent. This time, it was Auburn on the losing end, 16-10.

To the delight of the season-high 4,766 at Dick Howser Stadium, FSU is heading to the CWS for the

16th time. It will be FSU's sixth appearance this decade.

Not even the 1996 trip to the College World Series with a youthful team was as improbable and emotional. Nothing else, said Martin, comes close.

"This is the best. The schedule's difficulty, the problems we faced early in the year and our whole pitching staff was mostly new," Martin said. "I'm overwhelmed. Overjoyed. This is an absolute dream."

Twenty weeks after striking out 36 times, committing 10 errors and scoring just 10 runs and losing twice in the three-game ACC Baseball Blast at Disney World in Orlando, FSU is Omaha-bound.

"I had a chance to watch them on television in February at the Disney Blast, and they looked like a down Florida State team," Auburn coach Hal Baird said. "I think this is one of Mike's best coaching jobs."

ALL-REGIONAL TEAM

C	Jeremy Salazar	FSU
1B	Todd Faulkner	Auburn
2B	Heath Kelly	Auburn
3B	Jose Zabala	FSU
SS	Scott Pratt	Auburn
OF	Matt Diaz	FSU
OF	Brian Cox	FSU
OF	Josh Etheredge	Auburn
P	Wes Crawford	FSU
P	Brent Schoening	Auburn
DH	Casey Brookout	Oklahoma

Martin will be trying to change his team's fortune in the CWS, where it has won just one game in each of its previous five appearances. That's something to be addressed later in the week in Omaha.

Sunday was for Brooks Badeaux, who watched Auburn deny FSU a trip to Omaha last year and has struggled this season. He pun-

tuated his last home game by doing the 'Nole cheer near the pitcher's mound with victory in hand.

"I'm so happy," Badeaux said. "I can't say enough for this team. Last year, having J.D. Drew and Jeremy Morris, we had a great baseball team. This year, we have no big names."

Sunday was also for regional MVP Matt Diaz, every opponent's nightmare, who was able to live out a dream.

"I get to go to (Omaha) as a freshman, I get to go with my brother (Zach)," he said.

Diaz had done the unimaginable. No, not his seven homers in the regional. More impressive than that, he made FSU fans forget Drew and Morris.

The No. 1-seeded Seminoles (33-18) avoided a second game on Sunday by hanging on after taking a

Please see FSU, 5C

13-0 lead. Auburn's bats awakened in the seventh to chase starter Nick Stocks (7-2). The freshman had a one-hitter going until Auburn erupted with seven runs off Stocks and reliever Scott Proctor.

Up 13-7, FSU added three runs in the sixth to seal it.

"(After that) it was just a matter of something really bad was going to have to happen (to FSU)," Baird said.

It never did.

FSU needed just seven pitches to resume its offensive onslaught of the previous two days. Jose Zabala, with Badeaux on first base, took a 3-1 pitch over the right field fence. It was FSU's 19th homer of the tournament, not bad for a team that hit 64 in the 67 games prior to the regional. FSU added six runs in the second and three more in the third to take a 12-0 lead.

When FSU finished on Sunday, it had abused Auburn pitchers for 20 hits, including six for extra bases. There was no reason for Auburn starter Kevin Knorst, ripped for seven hits and nine runs in 1½ innings, to feel alone.

The Seminoles roared through the Atlantic II Regional's four games with 80 hits, including 19 doubles and 18 homers. FSU produced an NCAA regional record 76 runs, an average of 19 per game.

Seminole pitching was stellar

and all but forgotten. FSU pitchers gave up 30 hits and 14 earned runs prior to Auburn's outburst in the seventh and still finished with a regional best 5.75 ERA.

The only missing piece on Sunday was a Matt Diaz homer, but no Seminole was complaining. Diaz is 29 of 45 (.644) for 27 RBI during the postseason, including the ACC

Tournament. The freshman was 4 of 6 against Auburn. He belted seven homers in the previous three games and was 11 of 14 for 13 RBI in the regional, good enough to be named MVP.

Florida State placed four others on the all-regional team: catcher Jeremy Salazar, Zabala, Cox and Wes Crawford.

The Seminoles will learn the pairings for the College World Series today. FSU's first game will be played either Friday or Saturday. FSU probably will be seeded fourth or fifth.

"We know it's going to be extremely difficult, but let me say this," Martin said. "Stranger things have happened this year."

Florida St. 16
Auburn 10

FSU (33-18)		Auburn (44-18)	
ab	r h so	ab	r h so
Baderus 2b	4 2 1	Rich cf	4 1 1
Zabala 3b	4 2 4	Zarhos rf	1 0 0
Cox cf	6 2 2	Kelly 2b	5 0 0
Hendrix dh	3 2 1	Pratt ss	5 2 0
Otero oh	1 0 0	Etheredge dh	2 2 2
Diaz rf	4 1 4	Faulkner 1b	4 1 1
Cash lb	3 0 0	Guernsey lf	2 0 0
Widert lb	3 0 0	Reid ph/cf	3 1 0
Jennigan if	4 2 2	Wardall 3b	3 1 0
Groves ss	5 2 2	Turco 3b	1 0 0
		Kent rf/cf	5 1 2
Totals	44 14 28 14	Totals	39 10 12 10

Florida State 343 100 386-14 38 3
Auburn 090 807 883-10 12 1

E—Proctor (1), Zabala (18), Rich (4). DP—FSU 1, LOB—FSU 8, Auburn 9. 2B—Cox (36), Diaz 3(17), Groves (19), Henderson (7), Zabala (17), Etheredge (19), Kent (8), Pratt (21), 10B—Zabala (3), Faulkner (20), Rich (3). SB—Cox (27).

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Florida State						
Shocks W (7-2)	5 1/3	5	3	3	6	4
Proctor S (7)	3 1/3	7	5	4	1	3
Auburn						
Knorst L (1-1)	1 1/3	7	9	9	3	2
Wood	2 1/3	7	4	3	1	0
McManus	3 1/3	7	4	3	1	0
Burke	1 1/3	2	0	0	0	2
Jones	1	1	0	0	0	0
WP—Proctor (4), Knorst (4). U—Parouette, Burleson, Pacheco, Lostallo. T—309. A—4766.						