

Knox, Seminoles lead golf by nine

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Florida State's golf team, led by Kenny Knox and Danny Hepler, bolted to a nine-stroke lead after the first round of the 54-hole Metro Conference tournament here Friday.

Knox, the Leon High graduate, shot an even-par round of 71 and shared the first-round individual leadership with Danny Thompson of Louisville.

Another stroke back, at one-over-par-72, was Hepler and fellow FSU teammates Richard Jeffers and freshman Jim Crowley.

The foursome gave the Seminoles a team score of three-over-par 287, nine shots better than Memphis State's 296.

Georgia Tech was in third place with a 298, followed by Cincinnati at 304, Louisville at 308, Tulane at 311 and St. Louis at 314.

Sharing second place among the individualss with the FSU threesome were Mike Johnson of Georgia Tech, Kyle Howard of Memphis State and Larry Mize of Georgia Tech.

FSU coach Don Veller, pleased with his team's performance under the circumstances of poor playing conditions, nonetheless struck a blow for concern.

"Nine strokes is not a very big lead in golf," he noted. "A bad round here and a good round there and you can get a swing of nine strokes in a hurry."

The tournament, switched to Farmington Country Club because it's in the best shape of any course in the city, winds up Sunday with the winner very likely to be invited to the NCAA championships.

The Memphis area, struck with severe winter weather, had all of its golf courses practically ruined, and the poor conditions have turned already testing courses into monsters.

"This course is so tight," quipped Veller, "that you've almost got to walk single file down the fairways. It's

really a tribute that our players did so well."

Knox, who was two over par after the first three holes, recovered with some accurate shot making in the narrow fairways.

"My putting was terrible," he said. "I had 34 putts, so you can see I had to make some pretty good shots elsewhere."

He hit 17 fairways and 16 greens in regulation, while Hepler hit 16 fairways and 15 greens in regulation.

"The greens are almost impossible to putt," Hepler said. "It's the same for everyone and I think we're in pretty good position with our first round."

Results Friday in the Metro Conference golf tournament at Farmington Country Club, Memphis, Tenn:

71 — Danny Thompson (Louisville), Kenny Knox (FSU).

72 — Mike Johnson (Ga. Tech.), Kyle Howard (MSU), Larry Mize (Ga. Tech.), Richard Jeffers (FSU), Danny Hepler (FSU), Jim Crowley (FSU).

73 — Rick Fletcher (FSU).

74 — Jim Kilduff (Cin), Paul Haire (MSU).

75 — Charles Nieman (Cin), Rick Gunst (Tulane), South Smith (MSU), Doug Lehman (St. Louis), Dan Harlowe (MSU), Dan Shinnaburger (MSU).

76 — Lee Cheairs (MSU), Bo Bowden (Ga. Tech).

77 — Doug Miller (Louisville), Herb List (Tulane), Jeff Kruempelman (Cin).

78 — Roger Davis (St. Louis), Reid Brannen (Cin), Joe Quirk (Ga. Tech).

79 — Mike Reise (Tulane), John Juvenal (FSU).

80 — Mike Deppelt (Tulane), Kevin Delan (St. Louis), Mike Bittman (Tulane), Tom Austin (Louisville), Chris Hartlage (Louisville), Brad Shaffner (Louisville).

81 — Jim Hubiesen (Tulane), Kevin Sehriewer (St. Louis), John Perry (Ga. Tech).

82 — Greg Gibson (St. Louis).

83 — Rick Brune (Cin), Steve Frank (Louisville), Steve Hopson (Geo. Tech).

84 — Dave Nishaus (Cin).

85 — Mark Leffevre (St. Louis).

Team scores — Florida State 287, Memphis State 296, Georgia Tech 298, Cincinnati 304, Louisville 308, Tulane 311, St. Louis 314.

FSU leads golf by seven

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Florida State still had a seven-stroke lead heading into today's final 18 holes of the Metro Conference championship and ace Kenny Knox had himself a four-shot lead in the chase for individual honors.

Knox fired a three-under par 68 down the tight fairways of Farmington Country Club to break out of a deadlock with Danny Thompson of Louisville, who slipped to third place with a two-over par 73 Saturday.

Knox, at three-under 139 for 36 holes, was being challenged by Kyle Howard of Memphis State, who had a par 71 Saturday for a two-round total of 144.

As a team, the Seminoles were 12 over par at 580 for the four-man team, with Memphis State in second place at 587, Georgia Tech third at 593, Cincinnati fourth at 608, Louisville fifth at 610, Tulane sixth at 614 and St. Louis seventh at 640.

Other Florida State scores Saturday include Denny Hepler's 73, Richard Jeffers with a 74, Rick Fletcher's 77, John Juvenal's 74 and Jim Crowley's 82.

Knox lifts golfers to easy win

By BOB BLANKENSHIP

Executive sports editor

MEMPHIS—It's marvelous what a little six-foot putt can accomplish.

Kenny Knox stroked one of them here Sunday on the final hole of the Metro Conference golf championships and touched off Florida State's second victory celebration in two days.

It was incidental that it was for an eagle as Knox and his Seminole teammates nailed down the championship by eight strokes over defending champion Memphis State.

It also staked the curly-headed blond out of Leon High School to the individual championship and a share of the award as the outstanding athlete in the league's spring championships.

The eagle gave him a one-under-par 70 for the final day, and a 54-hole total of 209, four under par, and four shots ahead of teammate Danny Hepler.

He shared the Outstanding Athlete award with FSU baseballer Terry Kennedy in deadlock in voting among media personnel.

"GREAT, JUST great," smiled Knox about the award. "It capped great weekend."

Florida State, posting a team score of 877, now waits around, like the baseball team, for an expected bid to the NCAA national championships early next month.

Memphis State finished second with an 885, followed by Georgia Tech (909), Louisville (910), Cincinnati (921), Tulane (924) and St. Louis (972).

"I played pretty good," said Knox. "I hit it good . . . it was just a matter of putting. I got some that went in and some that didn't."

He got enough of them to go in, putting just 31 times here in the final round.

But his secret to scoring of the tight Farmington Country Club course was keeping the ball in play. He strayed from the narrow fairways only nine times in the 54 holes. He also hit 43 greens in regulation.

"I REALLY played steady . . . I kept it in play and that was important on this golf course," he said.

"All I knew I had to do to win," Knox added, "was to beat Hepler. He was my strongest opposition."

Hepler, who ran into disaster again Sunday on No. 16, was indeed his only real challenger.

Hepler, who knocked in birdie putts of 30, 20 and 10 feet, and chipped for another, took a fat six on the par-four Sunday. He took a seven on it Saturday.

A transfer from Ball State, Hepler shot a final round 68 to finish the 54-hole tournament at even par 213. His 68 tied Knox' 68 on Saturday as the two low rounds of the tournament.

Rick Fletcher shot a final round 77 for the Seminoles and finished at 227, while teammates John Juvenal and Richard Jeffers closed with a 75 and 82, respectively, for a totals of 228.

The Seminoles' Jim Crowley finished with a 77 and a 231.

"The darn thing cost me the tournament," said Hepler, who hit it out of bounds both days when the ball struck a paved cart path and jumped into the water. He parred the hole the first day.

Coach Don Veller had high praise for his team, and, like baseball coach Woody Woodward, was planning on hanging around the telephone waiting a call from the NCAA.

Team scores — Florida State 877, Memphis State 885, Georgia Tech 909, Louisville 910, Cincinnati 921, Tulane 924, St. Louis 972.

Individual

209—Kenny Knox (FSU) 71-68-70.
213—Danny Hepler (FSU) 72-73-68.
214—Denny Thompson (Louisville) 71-73-70.
218—Kyle Howard (Memphis St.) 72-71-75.
219—South Smith (Memphis St.) 75-71-73;
Lee Chemirs (Memphis St.) 76-69-74.
220—Larry Mize (Ga. Tech) 72-73-75.
222—Mike Johnson (Ga. Tech) 72-75-75.
227—Herb List (Tulane) 77-72-78; Rick Fletcher (FSU) 73-77-77.
228—Jim Kilduff (Cin) 74-77-77; Brad Schaffner (St. Louis) 80-73-75; John Juvenal (FSU) 79-74-75; Richard Jeffers (FSU) 72-74-82.
229—Paul Haire (Memphis St.) 74-81-74.
230—Reed Branon (Cin) 78-76-76;
Charles Nieman (Cin) 75-73-82.
231—Mike Pittman (Tulane) 80-77-74,
Jim Crowlev (FSU) 72-82-77; Dan Schinebarger (Memphis St.) 75-78-78.