

USF Ladies Win State Title

By HENRY LEE PAUL
Tribune Correspondent

The writing was on the wall at the University of South Florida gym Saturday night.

"It's Brahman's fate to take state."
That they did!

By delivering a nail-biting 61-59 victory over Florida State, the third-seeded Brahman's ladies won the state Division I college women's college basketball championship and upset all the odds.

"We showed them that we are for real," said South Florida coach Joanne Rogers, referring to the 86-61 defeat to the Seminoles in the first game of Saturday's final round, the only tournament loss for South Florida, and the game necessitating the Brahman's two-point verdict Saturday night.

"No one thought we could beat Florida State or Florida, but we did. And, we proved that we could hang on in the clutch. We have just reached our peak."

After having lost two decisive regular season decisions each to Florida State and Florida, few thought the young Brahman's had a chance in the tournament.

But, they were implacable in dealing out upset upon upset.

Both FSU and South Florida will participate in the Southern Regionals in Tallahassee March 8 through 10. The top two teams of each of the Southern states will participate, including defending national champion Delta State of Cleveland, Miss.

It was an appropriate nail-biting finish for the dramatic tournament.

The Lady Seminoles came charging back from a seven-point deficit to tie

the game with less than a minute to play.

But the Brahman defense held on to the lead, while Laura Mooney came charging downcourt and netted the final two-points with a layup.

Six-foot standout center Elaine Fant turned in another stellar defensive performance, as South Florida shut down the quick-moving FSU offense.

It was an all-around offensive effort as four Brahman's ended up in double figures.

Beth Garvey led the pack with 15, Jennifer Merritt and Laura Mooney each added 13. Despite sustaining a leg injury early in the game, Fant pumped in 12.

For the Seminoles, Jackie Arnold netted 20, and all-tournament player Cherry Rivers added 11.

Both York and Fant were named all-tournament for USF.

FLORIDA STATE (59) — Gailey 4 0-0 8, Weigand 1 0-0 2, Silsby 5 0-0 10, Ruffa 3 1-1 7, Rivers 4 3-6 11, Arnold 7 6-8 20, Collins 0 1-2 1. Totals 24 11-15.

SOUTH FLORIDA (61) — Merritt 5 3-5 13, Fant 3 6-7 12, Mooney 6 1-1 13, York 2 0-0 4, Johnson 2 0-0 4, Garvey 6 3-4 15. Totals 24 13-17.

Halftime score — USF 30, FSU 27. Total fouls FSU 19, USF 18. Fouled out — Gailey.