

No. 9 Soccer To Play For ACC Title After 1-0 Win Over No. 25 Maryland

Seminole set to play for the ACC Title for the second time in the last three years.

Nov. 7, 2003

Box Score

Rowland's Goal

Cary, NC - For the second time in the last three seasons the ninth-ranked Florida State soccer team will play for the ACC Championship title. The Seminoles (13-6-1, 4-2-1) downed No. 25 Maryland (11-8-1) 1-0 to join 15-time ACC Champion North Carolina as the only two schools to play for the ACC Title two of the last three years. With their ACC Championship game appearance Sunday, only North Carolina and Clemson will have appeared in the title game more times than FSU since the Tribe joined the conference in 1995 and in the history of the conference only four of the eight schools have played in more ACC finals than FSU.

"I want to congratulate (Maryland coach) Shannon (Higgins-Cirovski) and her team for a very intense game tonight. They are going to make a very good run in the NCAA Tournament," said head coach Patrick Baker. "We are very excited to play for the ACC Championship for the second time in three years. It is hard to believe from where this program was such a short time ago to finishing in the upper half of the ACC regular season the last few years, advancing in the ACC Tournament and NCAA Tournament. It is a credit to the young ladies in this program."

"I think they (Florida State) were the better team tonight," said Higgins-Cirovski. "Their midfield was dominant and we didn't come up with a good enough focus. They (FSU) played a good game and they deserved it."

Freshman Kelly Rowland scored the second goal of her career, both game-winners, as she beat UMD keeper Kristen Barnhill with a header shot in the 63rd minute. The ball was served in by junior Katie Beal and the assist gives the captain a career-high four assists on the season. Rowland and Beal, both starting center backs, also played key roles in shutting out the Terps. The clean sheet was the eighth recorded by FSU this year and ties a school record for shutouts in a single season.

"Katie played a great ball of the free kick like she always does," said Rowland. "I just latched on to it. It didn't take a whole lot of skill but I got my head on it and it got past the keeper."

"After the last free kick, I told Kelly (Rowland) that I was going to try and pull the kick out a little bit around the six," said Beal. "It seemed to work. In our walk-through yesterday we worked on that and I had full confidence someone would latch on to it and Kelly did a great job."

Beal is now fourth on the squad in points and assists and third on the team in goals. Her 14 points are a new single season record at FSU for a defender. The Alexandria, VA center back has been one of the best defenders in the conference this year and is also making a huge impact offensively on set pieces.

"It feels good to make a contribution offensively. Every time I serve a ball I try to strike the best ball I can," said Beal. "We have the capability up top to put the ball in the net if I serve it well. I am doing the easy part and they are making me look good with great finishes."

"I don't think we played all that well in the first half but thought we were pretty dangerous in the second and unlucky not to score a goal in the run of play," said Baker. "We were able to capitalize on a set piece and give Katie Beal credit for a great service and Kelly Rowland for finishing it."

The victory was the fifth for FSU over Maryland in their last six meetings and the second this year. It evened up the all-time series between the schools at 6-6-0 as Maryland is now the second ACC team FSU is at least .500 against in the all-time series. Florida State's six wins versus Maryland are the most FSU has collected versus any ACC squad.

This is the fourth straight season FSU has recorded at least 13 wins. In the first five years of Seminole soccer, the Tribe had



Kelly Rowland's header goal helped FSU advance to its second ACC Championship final in the last three years.

never recorded 13 wins and had 12 or more victories just once before. The win also gave Baker 151 in his career and his is now 64-39-8 since coming to FSU with two Sweet 16 appearances and two ACC Championship final appearances on his resume.

"I think this is the best team we have ever had," said Baker. "Everyone in this program has now been recruited by me or my staff. Kelly (Rowland) was part of the No. 7 recruiting class in the country. Katie Beal was part of the No. 8 recruiting class in the country. Our senior class was thirteenth. When you start to put that type of talent together you hope it starts to pay off.

"We have more speed, we have more athleticism and we have more dynamic players than we have ever had in our program," said Baker. "In fairness to our players, they have made it jell. This is a very special group on and off the field."

Florida State and Maryland played fairly even through the first 45 minutes. Both sides registered six shots and the Terrapin defense did a great job of limiting FSU to a handful of dangerous chances. The first came just seven minutes in. Leah Gallegos lofted a dangerous ball to the back post from the far right side of the 18-yard box. The service was headed to Amber Tollefson who was camped out at the back post waiting to volley the pass but the Terp defense got there before she had a shot.

Two minutes later Tollefson was involved in another great chance but this time she was on the giving end. The senior played a great ball down the seam to Julia Schnugg that put the speedy freshman in all alone with the Maryland keeper. But Barnhill came out and plucked the ball off Schnugg's foot before she could get the shot off.

In the 34th minute Tollefson's tried to put FSU in front again as her corner bent around the keeper and to the back post. The service looked to be heading in to the net before Maryland once again cleared it out of danger.

"We told our group that we weren't playing all that well in the first half," said Baker. "Our forwards weren't holding the ball and that didn't allow our midfielders to support. India (Trotter) stepped up her game in the central midfield and had much more of an impact in the second half. I think there was some fatigue on their (Maryland's) part in the second half as well and that allowed India to do some things she couldn't do in the first half."

"We wanted to come out, jump on them early and put the game away in the second half," said Camie Bybee. "Getting that go ahead goal against them is important because they have only come from behind for a win once this season."

The Tribe did just that and put together as good of a half as they have played all year. In the second period, FSU out shot Maryland 12-6 and were just buzzing with opportunities in front of the face of the Terp goal.

Just three minutes into the half, Bybee sent Gallegos in 1-v-1 with the Terp keeper. The sophomore, who is just one goal away from tying FSU's single season record, got around a diving Barnhill but the senior keeper just deflected enough of the shot to send it wide of the net.

Seven minutes later Gallegos turned the corner on the Maryland defense and got endline on the right side. She centered the ball to Schnugg but Barnhill intercepted the pass but couldn't hold on. Before FSU could clean up the loose ball, the UMD defense cleared it out of danger.

In the 61st minute Trotter sent Bybee in behind the backline once again. The junior was in alone on the left side of the box but lost her footing as she shot and Barnhill was there for the save.

Just two minutes later Beal and Rowland would strike with the game-winner.

"We were a little disappointed in our first half performance, said Amber Tollefson. "We re-grouped and told each other that we had to get one in. Kelly (Rowland) came through big time. We had worked on that set piece. Beal played another beautiful ball and Kelly stepped up."

After that, the Tribe turned the game over to its defense and keeper Joy McKenzie, who haven't let them down since the start of September. The Tribe back four was stellar again and Maryland hardly got a sniff of an equalizer in the second half. The Seminole defense recorded shutout number eight of the season as they have held eight of their last 11 opponents without a goal.

"The defense was amazing yet again. They have been on a roll all season," said McKenzie. "You have to give credit to Maryland because they matched our energy level right from the start and you could tell how bad both teams really wanted it. Our defense held them off for most of the first half and when the second half began you could tell it was a totally different game. We dominated. The defense limited their chances and this was just a great effort by the whole team."

"We are clicking defensively and we know our capabilities and how each other works," said Beal. "We are doing a great job of covering for one another and work so well as a unit. It is really coming along for us. We are really confident especially after these two wins. This game Sunday will be huge for us and it proves our second place conference finish was justified"

The Florida State defense has probably been the unsung hero of FSU's turnaround from a 1-4-0 start to a 12-2-1 run to this appearance in the ACC Championship final. The group has lost its leader in Kristin Boyce and has started three players who had combined to start 12 games coming into the 2003 campaign yet they set a school record by allowing just five goals in ACC play and they are four goals ahead of the record for total goals allowed in a season.

Add to that the play of junior keeper McKenzie. The Florida native came to FSU by way of Houston, TX and has been stellar in net this year. She set the record for ACC shutouts for a career in one season and is now second in single season blankings. Her GAA of 0.73 is in the top 30 in the nation and she set records for shutout streaks in and out of ACC play.

"This whole group has done an amazing job," said Baker. "Even when we started slow, this team responded and went 12-2-1 after that. We have played as well as and gotten as many good results as anyone in the country and that is great for the girls.

"When you think about where we were then making the change defensively. We moved a freshman in Kelly Rowland into the middle. Marion Cagle made the first college starts of her career. The group really started to jell, they turned a corner and Joy (McKenzie) really started to come on in goal. Then we lose (Kristin) Boyce and T (Teresa Rivera) steps in and we haven't lost a beat. She just keeps getting better and better. Our backs are doing a very good job of limiting opponent's chances."

The win and ACC Championship final appearance is justification for a team that fell out of all four national polls after a rough start and barley could climb back in despite going 12-2-1 against the one of the three toughest schedules in the nation this year. They finished second in the conference yet finished with fewer players on the All-ACC first and second team than Clemson (third), Duke (fourth) and Virginia (fifth) and with an equal number of players as Maryland (sixth) and Wake Forest (seventh).

"I think a lot of the things we have done lately will prevent people from over looking this team and its players in the future," said Tollefson. "It took four years for people to recognize (Kristin) Boyce as a first team All-ACC player, which she has been for a long time. I can't stress how much talent we have on this team that goes unrecognized. Sometimes we do feel that is a slap in the face. It doesn't really matter though because we are winning as a team and the more we keep getting to ACC Championships the more respected we will become."

"All we are going to try and do is continue to win," said Baker. "If we can play for an ACC Championship every other year and continue to go to Sweet 16's the respect will come. I think people realize we are a good team. When we went to the ACC finals in 2001, we were very fortunate to advance past Virginia. That wasn't the case tonight. Tonight we deserved to win and go to the championship game. We feel like we are playing and defending as well as any team in the nation and are very excited about the position we are in."

This year the Seminoles do feel like they belong in Sunday's championship game. They finished just behind Carolina in the ACC standings and beat two very good squads in Wake Forest and Maryland to make this year's final. The two wins in this year's tourney double the wins FSU had in ACC Tournament history coming in where they were 1-8-2 despite advancing to the semi-finals two of the last three seasons.

"We have played two very good teams to get here (the final)," said Baker. "I don't know how much it was mentioned but our win over Wake was just our second ever in program history. Every one of these games is an NCAA caliber game and it was huge for us to beat a great team like Wake."

In 2001, FSU dominated Maryland 7-2 in the opening round of the ACC Tournament before playing 150 scoreless minutes against Virginia. The Cavs out shot FSU 35-5 but the Tribe held on to win 3-2 in penalty kicks. That win advanced FSU to face Carolina, which captured its 14th ACC crown by beating the Seminoles 4-0.

"It is awesome being in the final two of my three years," said Bybee. "We all feel a little more refreshed since we didn't have to play 150 minutes in the semifinals like we did versus Virginia in 2001. I am glad to be back. We have a better team this year and we will try to make a game of it versus an awesome Carolina team."

"To play on television against the No. 1 team in the nation almost feels like playing in the College Cup to me," said Tollefson. "It is so important that we get to play in front of little kids who were just like we were growing up and dreaming about playing on this stage. I feel like that it is just as important as a national championship game. This is what we want and what we play for. You play in the ACC for chances like this. We feel like we are one of the nation's top program's now and advancing to another ACC Championship final is proof of that."

Next to its 3-2 upset win over Carolina in 2000 in Tallahassee, the Seminoles' 1-0 loss at Chapel Hill a week ago was one of the school's best ever showings ever versus the Heels. The game was scoreless for over 67 minutes before Mary McDowell got the game-winner off a Cat Reddick free kick. The Tribe is 1-14 all-time versus the Heels and 0-6 in the ACC Tournament where UNC has outscored FSU 32-1.

"We are going to prepare to win the championship," said Baker. "The one thing I shared with our juniors is that we had our best regular season ever their freshman year and we went to the ACC Championship game. We were so excited last year to finally host it and Maryland kicked our butt on our home field. That left a bad taste in our mouth. This year we talked about going out and getting back to the championship game."

"Every year it gets more special and every team respects those who came before them," said Tollefson. "Getting back to the championship game versus UNC is such a credit to this whole team. Every single player has helped us to get here. I look around and can't help but feel how much every player has contributed. This is so special and we will leave it all on the field Sunday."

Despite the lopsided record and the large margin of victory in North Carolina's favor, FSU has made remarkable strides in closing the gap between the schools. They have finished just behind UNC in recruiting in the southeast in two of the last three years and finished ranked just behind the Heels in the regional rankings after the season was over in 2002.

"We have been right behind Carolina in recruiting in the region with our freshman and junior classes. We feel like we are bringing in good talent and closing the gap," said Baker. They are still the measuring stick. We are trying to compete with them and keep making positive strides. I look at where this program has come over the last four years and I will put our start and finish up against anybody's.

"We are excited for the challenge. If we can be mentioned in the same breath as North Carolina, that is a huge achievement. If we can be just behind Carolina in recruiting and how we finish in the ACC that is awesome for us, but it will take an unbelievable effort for us to beat them Sunday."

The Tribe will face consensus No. 1 North Carolina (20-0-0, 7-0-0) for the ACC title Sunday, November 9 at 1:30 p.m. The game will be carried live in Florida on the Sunshine Network. For more information on the 2003 ACC Championships final and the Seminole soccer team, please log on to www.seminoles.com, the official athletic department website for Florida State University

Soccer Box Score (Final)
2003 Florida State Soccer
#25 Maryland us #9 Florida State (Nov 07, 2003 at Cary, NC)

Maryland (11-8-1, 2-5-0) vs.
 Florida State (13-6-1, 4-2-0)
 Date: Nov 07, 2003 Attendance: 4461
 Weather:

Goals by period	1	2	Tot
Maryland.....	0	0	- 0
Florida State.....	0	1	- 1

Maryland				
Pos	##	Player	Sh	SOG G A
GK	0	Kristen Barnhill....	-	- - -
MF	4	Katie Ludwig.....	-	- - -
MF	5	Jen Biscoe.....	-	- - -
MF	6	Audra Poulin.....	-	- - -
F	8	Kimmy Francis.....	1	- - -
MF	9	Mallory Mahar.....	2	1 - -
D	10	Ashly Kennedy.....	-	- - -
D	12	Jennifer Lovecchio..	-	- - -
F	18	Ali Andrzejewski....	5	3 - -
D	20	Lauren Krasko.....	-	- - -
D	21	Lindsay Givens.....	-	- - -
----- Substitutes -----				
	2	Amy Johnson.....	-	- - -
	11	Simone Dekker.....	-	- - -
	17	Lindsay Niehaus....	2	1 - -
	27	Danielle Malagari...	-	- - -
	Totals.....		10	5 0 0

Florida State				
Pos	##	Player	Sh	SOG G A
GK	18	Joy McKenzie.....	-	- - -
MF	2	Amber Tollefson....	-	- - -
D	3	Teresa Rivera.....	-	- - -
MF	5	Jez Ratliff.....	1	- - -
F	6	Julia Schnugg.....	2	- - -
D	10	Kelly Rowland.....	1	1 1 -
F	13	Leah Gallegos.....	8	1 - -
MF	15	Camie Bybee.....	3	1 - -
D	17	Marion Cagle.....	-	- - -
D	20	Katie Beal.....	1	- - 1
MF	28	India Trotter.....	-	- - -
----- Substitutes -----				
	14	Rachel McDowell.....	-	- - -
	22	Toby Ranck.....	-	- - -
	Totals.....		16	3 1 1

Maryland				
##	Player	MIN	GA	Saves
0	Kristen Barnhill....	90:00	1	2

Shots by period			
1	2	Tot	
Maryland.....	4	6	- 10
Florida State.....	4	12	- 16

Corner kicks			
1	2	Tot	
Maryland.....	1	1	- 2
Florida State.....	3	1	- 4

Florida State				
##	Player	MIN	GA	Saves
18	Joy McKenzie.....	90:00	0	5

Saves by period			
1	2	Tot	
Maryland.....	0	2	- 2
Florida State.....	3	2	- 5

Fouls			
1	2	Tot	
Maryland.....	4	5	- 9
Florida State.....	6	4	- 10

SCORING SUMMARY:

GOAL	Time	Team	Goal Scorer	Assists	Description
1.	62:44	FSU	Kelly Rowland (2)	Katie Beal	Rowland heads in off free kick

CAUTIONS AND EJECTIONS:

YC-FSU #13 (11:07); YC-MARYLAND #10 (63:04); YC-FSU #3 (74:50)

Officials: Referee: Jon Wilson; Asst. Referee: George Uergara; Mark Kadiecik;
 Alt. Official: Michael Stutt; Scorer: Elliott Finebloom;
 Offsides: Maryland 0, Florida State 2.

 Referee signature