

FSU women top A&M, Florida

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As the Los Angeles Dodger teams of the early '60s would attest, it is not as important to score a lot of runs as it is to score enough runs.

Thursday afternoon, before an encouraging crowd of nearly 200 at the Florida State intramural field, the Lady Seminole softball team scored enough runs to ease past Florida A&M 7-1 and Florida 5-1. Neither contest was a slugfest.

The Lady Seminoles managed only six hits, two of them home runs, in defeating FAMU, which had only five hits. FSU got to stroking a wee bit better in the second contest, banging out eight hits to Florida's five.

The important stat for the Lady Seminoles, however, was in the "W" column where it added two victories over teams that will join FSU in the 10-team state tournament field next weekend in Jacksonville. And by beating the Lady Gators, FSU, 40-7, squared its season record against Florida at 4-4 and strengthened its claim on the No. 1 seed in the state tournament.

"It's hard to tell," said Florida coach Linda Marker, whose team moved to 29-8 by defeating FAMU 5-0 in the day's third game. "But they've played more games and won more games. That should make them the top seed."

"We'll probably be No. 1," agreed FSU coach JoAnn Graf. "I can't say for sure, but beating Florida today probably helped."

Not as concerned about the seeding was FAMU coach Joseph Tolliver, whose team has never beaten FSU in the more than a dozen contests Tolliver has coached the Rattlerettes in over the past three years. Though Cassandra Bruner smashed a solo home run in the first inning of the opener, the Rattlerettes never got on track, managing only three hits against Florida. But Tolliver is not ready to throw in the towel at the state tournament.

"Hey, we're still in it for win, place or show," said Tolliver, whose team is 19-16. "It's all mental I figure. Take away what happened today, and we're capable of whupping everybody in the field."

The winner and the runnerup of the state tournament advance to the AIAW regional tournament in Savannah, Ga., the first weekend of May. The winners and runnersup of the four regional tournaments advance to the national championships in Raleigh, N.C., the third weekend in May.

This is the first season the AIAW has staged a national tournament and the field will include seven at-large choices plus North Carolina State, which received an automatic invitation for hosting the tournament. Graf figures her team deserves an at-large bid should it fail to capture any of the other titles.

"We've got a good record and we've played a tough schedule; we haven't shied away from anybody," said Graf, who has led the Lady Seminoles to the state title each of the two seasons she has coached at FSU. FSU finished second in the regional both years.

Thursday's doubleheader victory wasn't all that tough for the Lady Seminoles. After spotting FAMU a 1-0 lead in the first inning on Bruner's homer, FSU tied the game in the second on four walks by Rattlerette pitcher Roslyn Thomas before exploding for five runs in the same inning. Run-scoring singles by Jan Sikes and Cathy Gooding

produced two runs, before Toni Robinette cleared the bases with a home run to the alley in left-center. FSU added its final run on a solo homer by Darby Cottle in the fifth — the last of FSU's six hits.

The Lady Seminoles had eight hits against Florida, but the game turned on defensive lapses by Florida. The Lady Gators jumped out 1-0 in their half of the first inning before errors by third baseman Connie Dieter and second baseman Martha Litz put the first two FSU batters on base in the Lady Seminole half of the inning.

Cottle, Susan Painter and Sikes followed with RBI hits and Robinette closed out a four-run inning with a sacrifice fly. Robinette added a sacrifice fly in the third for FSU's final run.

"Florida didn't have a good game," said Graf. "I think the way we jumped out front put some pressure on them. And I think the crowd got the girls psyched up."

"I thought we played pretty well. We kind of died there after the first inning. But that's what we've been doing all year, scoring in two or three of the innings and not hitting much the rest of the way."

"We're going to have to hit more consistently in the state tournament."