

State teams dominate tournament

By GERALD ENSLEY
Democrat sportswriter

Despite an unexpected snag, the first day of the AIAW Region III softball tournament went pretty much as expected Friday.

The three Florida schools, Florida State, South Florida and Florida, advanced to today's competition, joining Georgia Southern as the final four teams in contention. Florida State and South Florida won two games apiece without a loss and comprise today's winner's bracket. Florida and Georgia Southern each lost a game Friday while winning two.

In this morning's opening games at 10:30 at Messer Field, FSU will play South Florida, and Florida will play Georgia Southern. Second games follow at 11:30 a.m., with the championship game set for 2:30 p.m. and, if necessary, 3:45 p.m.

Eliminated from the tournament was Columbus (Ga.) College, Auburn, Mississippi and Mississippi University for Women. Columbus and Auburn lost consecutive games. Mississippi and MUW each sandwiched two losses around a victory.

The unexpected event of the day was a protest filed by Mississippi, which precipitated a 45-minuted delay in the tournament. A mixup in the brackets, caused by the use of an incorrect pairing sheet, resulted in Mississippi's playing Florida twice in three games, losing both contests 16-0 and 7-0.

The mixup, which probably would have gone unnoticed had Florida not lost to South Florida 4-3 after beating Mississippi in the day's first game, was not noticed by Mississippi coach Vivian Langley until after her team had beaten Auburn 3-0, setting up the second confrontation with Florida.

Once discovered, Langley sought to have tournament officials switch games and let her Lady Rebels play either Georgia Southern or MUW.

A committee of tournament officials denied her request, with tournament director Janice Yocco saying, "It would just be adding another wrong to the situation."

Yocco, who agreed Mississippi had a legitimate complaint, pointed out that the incorrect pairings already had resulted in the wrong teams playing the opening games and that to change opponents at the point of the protest would be unfair to the teams that had lost to opponents they should not have played.

Langley then asked that the protest be sent to Lucy McDaniel, the AIAW commissioner of Division I championships, who was contacted by phone in Bradenton. After some deliberation, McDaniel stood by the decision of the tournament committee.

Never vehement about the protest, Langley was sanguine after Florida beat her team a second time.

"It's always tough to come back after losing to a team that good," said Langley. "But it would have been a little bit better if we could have played someone more in our league."

"I'm not taking anything away from Georgia Southern or 'The W' (MUW), but Florida is a very good team."

Despite the protest, today's action shapes up nicely. South Florida had beaten Florida only once in six games before Friday, but hung in the late

innings to capture a 4-3 victory.

"We've lost lots of games this year in the bottom of the seventh," said South Florida coach Hildred Deese, whose team now owns a 42-16 record. "Today it was our turn for the breaks to come our way."

Florida coach Fran Cox, who was the FSU assistant coach last season, understood Langley's concern.

"Certainly, it is a psychological disadvantage to play a team that has just beat you," said Cox, whose mother, Ruth, is secretary-treasurer of the Lady Seminole Boosters. "But softball is a silly game. Anybody can beat anybody else."

Florida State captured both its victories rather easily, clubbing Columbus College 12-0 and defeating MUW 10-1. Cathy Gooding had three hits in each game for the Lady Seminoles, with Toni Robinette adding three in the first game and Darby Cottle three in the second game. The Lady Seminoles, the AIAW defending national champions, are 50-9.

The top two finishers in the tournament will gain berths in the national tournament May 13 through 15 in Graham, N.C. It is expected that another team from this tournament will gain one of the five at-large berths in the nationals.

FLORIDA STATE 010 350 3 — 12 14 1
COLUMBUS COLL. 000 000 0 — 0 3 5
W — Susan Painter. L — Betsy Golden.

AUBURN 002 000 0 — 2 9 2
MISSISSIPPI UW 000 400 x — 4 11 1
W — Diana Chism. L — Kendra Parker.

SOUTH FLORIDA 015 042 0 — 12 13 1
GA. SOUTHERN 000 001 0 — 1 10 5
W — Karen Gardner. L — Cheryl Hendricks.

FLORIDA 442 103 2 — 16 16 3
MISSISSIPPI 000 000 0 — 0 6 8
W — Jan Croud. L — Polly Jackson.

MISSISSIPPI 201 000 0 — 3 11 0
AUBURN 000 000 0 — 0 2 0
W — Kendra Parker. L — Polly Jackson.

GA. SOUTHERN 103 030 0 — 7 12 2
COLUMBUS 000 101 0 — 2 10 2
W — Cheryl Hendricks. L — Cindy Peevy.

SOUTH FLORIDA 202 000 0 — 4 7 1
FLORIDA 030 000 0 — 3 10 4
W — Nancy Lee. L — Janice Croud.

FLORIDA STATE 115 003 3 — 10 16 1
MISSISSIPPI UW 000 100 0 — 1 8 1
W — Susan Painter. L — Diana Chism.

MISSISSIPPI UW 000 000 5 — 5 6 4
GA. SOUTHERN 002 031 x — 6 12 1
W — Cheryl Hendricks. L — Diana Chism.

FLORIDA 400 201 0 — 7 12 2
MISSISSIPPI 000 000 0 — 0 6 3
W — Jan Croud. L — Polly Jackson.