

## Sluggin' Seminoles pound out title

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Mike Fuentes wears glasses, majors in accounting and never raises his voice, even when angry — which isn't often.

But put him on a baseball field, hand him a bat, and the guy goes crazy.

Fuentes capped a dazzling three-day performance Sunday as Florida State won the Metro Conference baseball championship at Seminole Field.

The Seminoles' junior center fielder hit three homers and drove in eight runs as FSU twice beat Memphis State, 14-11 and 11-7. The Seminoles automatically qualified for the NCAA South Regionals May 23-25 at a site to be determined.

For the tournament, Fuentes had 11 hits, including six home runs, and drove in 19 runs.

That earned him not only the award as the tournament's most valuable player, but he also was selected as the outstanding athlete of the four-sport Metro spring championships.

There were other components as FSU completed the five-game win streak they needed since losing their first game Friday and falling to the loser's bracket.

But it was Fuentes, who once was cut from the team, who picked the team up when it was down and kept it up when it got there.

"There's no one who deserved those awards more than Mike Fuentes," said FSU coach Mike Martin, who cut Fuentes three years ago.

"First for the kind of young man he is and second for his unbelievable performance in the tournament."

Fuentes shared hero honors with Jeff Ledbetter in the first game, which FSU had to win to force a final game playoff.

Trailing 11-9 in the bottom of the ninth, FSU loaded the bases with none out. Fuentes hit the first pitch from Blair Gilbert into center field for a single, scoring two runs and tying the game.

Don DeLoach stood at second and Fuentes was on first. Ledbetter lofted a fly ball to left field that got caught in the breeze. Joe Barkley drifted back, then smacked into the wall and fell to the ground. Where was the ball?

Fuentes didn't know.

"When he (Ledbetter) hit the ball, I knew Donny would try to tag up and get from second to third," Fuentes said. "As soon as I saw him (Barkley) go down, I went back to first to tag. I saw Ledbetter rounding the bag. He passed me. Then he kept pushing me to go forward. But I ran back to the bag, in case he did catch it."

But Barkley didn't catch it. The ball flew over the fence for a three-run homer and the Seminoles had won.

Barkley, it turned out, banged his head against the wall and blacked out for a brief time.

"I don't remember falling," he said. "The next thing I knew, I was on the ground."

Barkley said center fielder Phil Smith told him he missed the ball by "three or four inches."

Ledbetter, meanwhile, also was confused.

"I didn't know what was going on,"

he said. "Fuentes was saying, 'We won the game, we won the game!'"

The hit, his 16th homer of the season, removed the goat horns Ledbetter had sprouted earlier.

Ledbetter muffed an easy grounder in the eighth after Memphis State already had tied the game 9-9 on homers by Phil Smith and Scott Pearson off FSU starter Ken Smith.

Rich Webster, who hit the ball through Ledbetter's legs, eventually scored for a 10-9 Tigers' lead.

Memphis State scored another run in the ninth to lead by two, before the Seminoles stormed back.

Freshman David Smalley got the final two outs in the ninth for FSU and wound up with the first victory of his college career.

In the second game, the Seminoles led 11-1 after five innings, thanks in part to a two-run homer by Fuentes in the first, a grand-slam homer by Mike Yastrzemski in the third and a solo homer by Ledbetter in the fourth.

FSU pitcher Ken Fischer stymied the Tigers early, before surrendering seven runs over the final four innings

Others on the team were outfielder Rick Siriano and catcher Joe Roberts of Louisville, designated hitter Sam Dozier of Tulane and outfielder Jim Stewart of Virginia Tech.

B — G. Williams. HBP — by Hatcher (Garrett), by J. Williams (Cullen), by Schuler (Ramsey). WP — Schuler. PB — Ramsey. T — 3:35.

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
<b>Florida State</b>						
Fischer (W, 9-1)	7 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>	11	7	6	2	7
Smalley	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>3</sub>	1	0	0	1	3
<b>Memphis State</b>						
Litano (L, 4-1)	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>3</sub>	6	8	7	2	0
Williamson	6 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>	7	3	3	5	4

Balk — Litano. HBP — Martinez (by Litano). T — 2:55.