Memphis State avoids sweep

By KATY WILLIAMS

This was looking like a fun weekend for Florida State's baseballers — they had taken a doubleheader from Memphis State Saturday, after all. And Sunday, well, that was sophomore pitcher Steve Gelmine's birthday and reason enough for a Bellygram that danced along the third-base line while he and his teammates watched from the dugout.

Then the fun that stretched back 14 wins ended.

Florida State and its bats had gotten the better of Memphis State Saturday, but the Tigers and their pitchers, Tim Corder in particular, got the best of Seminole baseball Sunday. Memphis State, which had lost 17-0 and 2-1 in the doubleheader between the Metro Conference rivals, salvaged the three-game series at Seminole Stadium by holding off FSU 7-6.

Corder, the very pitcher who had irritated both Seminole players and fans by strutting and shaking his fist during a victory over FSU in the Metro Conference tournament a year ago, marked his return with an ever-effective performance that didn't even approach cocky.

In fact, when Corder left the game in the eighth inning after taking one of Steve Givens' hits in the shin, Seminole fans gave him a standing ovation.

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Corder, a junior, is considered one of the country's best collegiate pitchers. He was 10-1 a year ago and had entered this game with a 6-1 mark. He left the game with a school record for most career wins, 26.

This one came at the expense of the Seminoles' 14-game winning streak that had included a 118-36 scoring burst over their opponents. They have played 37 games in 41 days and emerged with a 41-13-1 record.

"It's been a hectic schedule, but we've pulled a pretty dad-gum good record from it," FSU coach Mike Martin said. "We're proud of the streak, but we can't play this up day-in and day-out. Today we got a little sluggish, but the enthusiasm returned for the eighth and ninth innings."

In all, Memphis State, which had managed only five hits in the previous two games, collected 14 hits to FSU's

Kevin Dotson was the biggest offender, going 3-for-5 and providing a three-run homer in the seventh that proved to be the difference in the

Memphis State also got the early runs, the first in the third inning when Shane Young's sacrifice fly scored Dennis Gourgeot. In the fifth, Allen Sigler's homer over the right field wall with two outs scored Bubba Cummings from first for a 3-0 lead.

Florida State didn't score until the sixth inning. Jody Reed's infield hit set up the Rick Figueredo's 39th and 40th RBIs when Figueredo, too, homered to the right.

Behind 3-2, FSU then loaded the bases on a double by Jimmy Jones, an error that put Mike Yastrzemski on and an infield hit by Givens. But a double play ended FSU's hopes of going ahead.

Memphis State countered with its final four runs in the seventh. First, Tim Dulin reached base, prompting Martin to replace Gray with Doug Treadway.

But Treadway had cut his thumb the previous evening on a crab claw, and the sore hand curtailed his accuracy. Three batters and three hits off Treadway, including Dotson's threerun homer that put the Tigers ahead 7-2, landed Steve Gelmine on the mound.

The Seminoles then began their crawl back into the game. A Reed hit, a Figueredo walk, a Jones hit and then a Yastrzemski two-RBI double made it 7-4 in the bottom of the eighth. Then, there was Givens' infield hit — which sent Corder to the ground and the dugout — and a sacrifice fly by Eric Deddins that scored Yastrzmski. Matt Robinson flew out to end the rally.

In the ninth inning, Reed scored on Yastrzemski two-out, two-strike single, 7-6. But Givens' hit toward first to end the game.

Jeff Gray, 5-2, took the loss.

"I felt to the very last out that we would win this," Martin said. "I didn't care what the score was going into the last few innings. This game was a credit to the competitiveness of this ballclub."

The Seminoles now break for final exams — that's why they're at FSU, after all — and next play a six-game series with Georgia Southern. The first three games will be at Seminole Stadium this weekend, followed by three in Atlanta.

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