

FSU faces uphill climb in Metro

Hokies knock Seminoles into losers' bracket

By George Maselli
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Florida State lives to play on another day in this tournament. But that life has taken on a perilous viewpoint from the losers' bracket.

The Seminoles fell into that trap by losing to Virginia Tech on Friday afternoon 8-5, sealing their own doom with a monumental base-running fiasco.

"I liked it. I didn't know Santa Claus came in such hot weather," said smiling Virginia Tech coach Chuck Hartman of the FSU gaffe.

The frustrated Seminoles then eliminated and laid out Cincinnati on Friday night 24-0. Yes, that's right, 24-0. Cincinnati was a most deserving victim.

Now it gets complicated and the tournament departs from the published bracket. The Seminoles, 52-20, will play South Carolina today.

If the Gamecocks beat Virginia Tech — in a battle of unbeaten teams at 11 this morning — they will play FSU tonight at 7:30. If they lose that game, they will play at 2:30 today. Virginia Tech and Tulane will have a similar arrangement.

But it's also simple now. A loss for FSU and it's curtains. The tournament championship carries with it an automatic NCAA tournament bid, and perhaps even a bigger bonus.

"I think the winner of the Metro will host a regional," said South Carolina coach June Raines. Speculation is that if FSU does not win this tournament that it will be sent to play in a regional in Miami.

And if the Seminoles don't win the Metro, their atrocious base-running in the Virginia Tech loss will be long remembered.

The situation: FSU was trailing 6-3 going into the bottom of the eighth inning. Vince Calandra, who had himself a very big day, led off

the inning with a solo homer. When Virginia Tech starter Dell Curry walked Roy Eppley, he was yanked after a good day's work.

Eric Mangham greeted reliever Joe Salisbury with a single. It was 6-4 with runners on first and second and none out. Got it? OK. Luis Alicea followed with a hit that rolled to the wall in right. Even though the Tulane right fielder never came close to catching the line drive, Eppley held up close to second. Mangham took off full blast.

Eppley finally rounded third base where he picked up the stop sign from third base coach Mike Martin, who had positioned himself almost by home plate. Not a handy location for Mangham to find him.

When the throw came back to the infield, Eppley was on third, Mangham was breaking back to second and Alicea was also breaking for second. By the time it was all over, Alicea was tagged out in a rundown, and Eppley, who had broken toward the plate, was nailed going back into third.

"That was not only a downer for them, it was an upper for us," said Hartman.

Angry fans went about assigning blame. Martin took most of the heat — and boos — from the crowd.

"I don't like to pass out blame, but the guy at first base (Mangham) did not keep his head up," said Martin. "When you've got a guy who runs like Roy Eppley, you've got to freeze on a line drive so you don't get doubled off."

The hit was an obvious one when it was hit, and Eppley could have scored easily. Mangham would have been the tying run on third with none out.

"When I hit the ball, I thought I had a double," said Alicea. "I saw second base open, so I took off. I was expecting him (Eppley) to score."

Mangham had no comment.

"There's no excuse for it," said Martin. "Now our backs are against the wall."

FSU could have gotten Mangham or Eppley or Martin or Alicea — depending on your viewpoint — off the hook. Gamecock relief ace Salisbury was on the verge of collapse in the ninth with an 8-4 lead.

Frank Fazzini led off the inning with a long drive that was knocked down by the wind in left and caught. Then Salisbury walked the next three batters to put the tying run at the plate. After a Calandra

single brought in one run, reliever Jon Hartness came on. He struck out Eppley and got Mangham on a bouncer to end it.

The game was also costly because FSU starter Mike Loynd suffered a back injury at some point during a gutty pitching performance. How serious it is remains to be seen. He will not likely be available for the rest of the tournament.

In the second game, Doug Little, 13-2, showed his own balky back was OK with five shutout innings. Fazzini, Calandra, Jimmy Jones, Eppley and Barry Blackwell had homers in the almost obscenely one-sided victory.

With two hits in the second game, Fazzini broke Jeff Ledbetter's school record of 119 hits in a season.

Virginia Tech					Florida St.				
	ab	r	h	bi		ab	r	h	bi
Buheller,cf	4	1	2	2	Alicea,2b	4	1	2	0
Sullivan,rf	5	1	2	1	Figueroa,ss	5	0	1	0
Plante,3b	5	0	0	0	Fazzini,lf	5	1	1	2
Webber,3b	0	0	0	0	Sorrento,rf	3	1	1	0
Canale,1b	4	1	1	3	Jones,1b	2	0	1	0

Boyle,c	4	0	0	0	Zoeller,1b	0	0	0	0
Agee,dh	1	0	0	0	Fulton,c	3	0	0	0
Bowers,dh	2	0	0	0	Calandra,3b	5	1	4	2
Basse,lf	4	1	1	0	Kosco,dh	3	0	0	0
Mance,2b	3	2	2	1	Pacetti,pr	0	0	0	0
Henderson,ss	4	2	2	0	Eppley,dh	1	0	0	0
					Kidd,cf	2	1	0	0
					Mangham,cf	3	0	1	0
Totals	36	8	10	7	Totals	36	5	11	4

Va. Tech	000	004	202	—	8	10	2
Florida St.	001	020	011	—	5	11	2

E—Canale, Mance, Calandra, Alicea. DP—Va. Tech 2. LOB—Va. Tech 4, FSU 13. 2B—Mance, Henderson. HR—Canale (23), Calandra (9). SB—Alicea. SH—Buheller.

IP H R ER BB SO							
Virginia Tech							
Curry, W(6-1)	7	8	4	2	5	2	
Salisbury	1 1/3	3	1	1	3	0	
Hartness, S(2)	2/3	0	0	0	0	1	
Florida St.							
Loynd, L(12-4)	6	4	4	4	2	0	
Revak	3	6	4	3	0	0	

WP—Curry 2. PB—Fulton. BK—Curry. HBP—Sorrento (Curry). T—2:52.

Florida State					Cincinnati				
	ab	r	h	bi		ab	r	h	bi
Alicea,2b	5	3	2	0	Miller,cf	3	0	1	0
Pacetti,2b	1	1	1	1	Robertson,cf	1	0	0	0
Figueroa,ss	5	4	2	1	Abbatiello,2b	4	0	0	0
Fazzini,lf	5	3	3	3	Kinnett,1b	4	0	1	0
Eppley,lf	1	1	1	3	Martin,c	3	0	1	0

Sorrento,rf	1	2	1	3	Hicks,c	1	0	0	0
Kosco,rf	2	0	0	0	Hardorder,lf	4	0	0	0
Zoeller,1b	2	0	1	1	Scott,dh	4	0	1	0
Jones,1b	4	1	1	2	Young,rf	2	0	0	0
Calandra,3b	3	3	2	3	Davis,lf	1	0	0	0
Gelmene,ph	1	0	0	0	Whisman,ss	3	0	2	0
Lewis,3b	0	0	0	0	Wagnkncht,ss	2	0	0	0
Blackwell,c	6	3	2	1	Byrne,rf	1	0	0	0
Saxner,dh	3	0	0	0					
Fulton,dh	0	1	0	0					
Thomas,dh	1	0	0	0					
Kidd,cf	3	1	0	1					
Mangham,cf	1	1	1	2					
Totals	49	24	17	21	Totals	33	0	6	0

Florida State	202	500	591	—	24	17	0
Cincinnati	000	000	000	—	0	6	6

E—Martin, Kinnett, Whisman 2, Wagenknecht, Abbatiello. DP—Cinn. 1. LOB—FSU 11, Cinn. 6. HR—Fazzini (27), Calandra (10), Jones (15), Eppley (2), Blackwell (8). SB—Zoeller, Sorrento, Alicea, Fazzini, Calandra. SF—Zoeller.

IP H R ER BB SO							
Florida State							
Little W,13-2	5	5	0	0	0	6	
Brown	4	1	0	0	0	2	
Cincinnati							
Sala L,5-6	3 1/3	6	8	6	6	6	
Summers	2/3	1	1	0	0	1	
Hehemann	2	1	0	0	2	2	
Conroy	2/3	4	5	4	4	0	
Brooks	1	2	6	2	3	1	
Gonderson	1 1/3	3	4	1	0	1	

WP—Sala. PB—Martin 2. HBP—Calandra (by Hehemann). T—3:07.