



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAY 15, 2005

Contact: Michael Smoose (850) 644-4836 or msmoose@mailers.fsu.edu.

HISTORY MADE AS FSU MEN'S TENNIS UPSETS NO. 11 UK 4-2 TO EARN FIRST BID TO NCAA SWEET 16

LEXINGTON, Ky. – Florida State University men's tennis has produced Grand Slam Champions, All-Americans and numerous professional players, but never have any of them reached the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Tournament. All that changed on Sunday (May 18) as history was made when the No. 18 Seminoles upset No. 11 Kentucky 4-2 to earn the school's first trip to the final site.

The win gave the Tribe their first 20-win season in two decades as they improved to 20-7 on the year. The Wildcats lost at home in the second round of the tournament for the third year in a row as they concluded their year at 21-10. The apprentice beat the master as FSU net boss **Dwayne Hultquist** started his coaching career as a graduate assistant to UK head man Dennis Emery in 1991.

"That's probably the biggest win in school history," Hultquist proclaimed. "We beat Duke last year when they were number four, but that wasn't in the NCAA Tournament. Winning and making it to the final site means a lot more to us.

"I didn't think too much about it (playing against Emery). The players are the ones playing, I'm not out there dueling him. The guys are the ones out on the court."

The first point wouldn't be decided for an hour and a half as the two teams split at number two and three with the top match going into a tiebreaker. In the end the Seminoles ran their nation's best doubles record to 25-2.

At number one, the match between the Seminoles' **Jeff Groslimond** (Atlanta, Ga.) and **Chris Westerhof** (Durban, South Africa) and UK's No. 4 team of Jesse Witten and Tigran Martirosyan only featured one break for each team. Florida State picked up its in the second game and built a 3-0 lead after Westerhof held serve. Down 4-2, Kentucky broke Westerhof then Witten held to make it 4-4.

The two teams traded serve until the match was tied at 8-8. In the tiebreaker, neither team held serve for the first five points until Kentucky built a 4-2 lead. UK improved its advantage to 5-3, but FSU battled back to tie at five. After trading points, the Wildcats had their first chance to win the match, but Westerhof held serve. UK had another chance at 8-7, but Groslimond won both of his points and then FSU broke Martirosyan for the win. With the victory, Groslimond and Westerhof tied their own single-season record with their 26th victory.

"I felt like that was the key to the entire match," Hultquist said. "We knew it was going to be a tight match and who ever won the doubles would really have an edge. Winning doubles was big because it gave us momentum going into singles and it showed as we won four first sets."

Florida State quickly had the advantage in doubles as No. 40 **Mat Cloer** (Brevard, N.C.) and **Ytai Abougzir** quickly dispensed of Matt Emery and Marcus Sundh. Down 3-1, the Seminoles rattled off the next seven games, including three breaks for the victory. **Jonathas Sucupira** (Sao Paulo, Brazil) and **Chip Webb** (Chattanooga, Tenn.) held off four match points before falling to Nate Emge and Marcus Hume 8-6.

"It's really special," Cloer added. "I've been going around for three years now hearing people talk about what they did in the Sweet 16 or in the quarters and I've never known what that feels like. Now we get our turn to taste it and we'll take full advantage of it."

The Seminoles lead only lasted for a little bit as Kentucky rallied to win the first two singles matches and grab the 2-1 advantage. Picking up the first win for UK was No. 3 Witten as he beat 26th-ranked Cloer 6-2, 7-5 at number one. The Wildcats got their first and only lead of the day when Martirosyan topped Westerhof 6-2, 6-1 at number four.

From there the Tribe took control of the match as it won three of the remaining match for their best victory since upsetting No. 4 Duke last season. At number five, Sucupira cruised to a 6-3 win in the first set over Emery. He took a 4-2 lead in the second set, but let the Wildcat back in the match as he had to hold serve to force the second stanza into a tiebreaker. In the breaker, Sucupira was in complete control as after Emery pulled to within a point at 3-2, Sucupira won the next four for the victory.

Giving the lead back to Florida State was Abougzir at number two in a two-set match that lasted nearly three hours. After jumping out to a quick 4-2 lead in the first set against No. 116 Hume, the sophomore was broken then Hume held to square everything at 4-4. Tied at 5-5, Abougzir held serve then came through with his

third break to win 7-5. Another huge break for Abougzir came up 4-3 in the second set as he went up 5-3 then close out Hume for the 7-5, 6-3 triumph.

All the attention now turned to the back courts where Webb was battling Sundh at number six and Groslimond was in the third set with Emge at number three. Emge had a 4-1 lead in the deciding set, but lost two in a row to the FSU junior when the match was halted.

Clinching the match for the Seminoles was the senior Webb who holds the team's best winning percentage in dual matches. The All-Atlantic Coast Conference selection easily took the first set 6-4 over Sundh and quickly ran out to a 3-0 lead in the second stanza. From there he held serve and finally clinched the win with a 6-4 decision in the second set.

"There have been a lot of obstacles in the way, at least for me, on and off the court so I can't think of a better way to go out, but it's not over yet," Webb said. "Obviously to have my mother and my sister here – the people that mean the most to me--makes it all the better. At the end I was just trying to play my game and not think about the score."

The win was Florida State's first in the second round of the NCAA Tournament in three tries. The Seminoles last made it in 2003 when they beat Miami in the first round, but fell to Florida. The other occurrence was the 1996 season when they beat South Carolina, but lost to host Duke.

Next up for the Seminoles is a rematch with No. 4 Illinois at 3 p.m. on Saturday (May 21) in College Station, Texas. The Seminoles lost to the Fighting Illini 5-3 indoors at Champaign, Ill., after losing 4-3 last season in Tallahassee.

No. 18 Florida State 4, No. 11 Kentucky 2

Box Score

Singles

No. 1: #3 Jesse Witten (UK) def. #26 Mat Cloer (FSU) 6-2, 7-5

No. 2: Ytai Abougzir (FSU) def. #116 Alex Hume (UK) 7-5, 6-3

No. 3: Jeff Groslimond (FSU) vs. Nate Emge (UK) DNF

No. 4: Tigran Martirosyan (UK) def. Chris Westerhof (FSU) 6-2, 6-1

No. 5: Jonathas Sucupira (FSU) def. Matt Emery (UK) 6-3, 7-6 (2)

No. 6: Chip Webb (FSU) def. Marcus Sundh (UK) 6-4, 6-3

Order of Finish: 1, 4, 5, 2, 6

Doubles

No. 1: Groslimond/Westerhof (FSU) def. #4 Martirosyan/Whitten (UK) 9-8 (8)

No. 2: #40 Cloer/Abougzir (FSU) def. Emery/Sundh (UK) 8-3

No. 4: Emge/Hume (UK) def. Sucupira/Webb (FSU) 8-6

Order of Finish: 2, 3, 1