

Eight Hours Later, No. 19 FSU Falls Short To No. 3 Duke, 4-2

Duke 4, FSU 2

April 22, 2006

RESULTS

ACC CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT CENTRAL

CARY, N.C. - No. 19 Florida State was so close of an upset over No. 3 and top-seeded Duke in the semifinals of the 2006 ACC Men's Tennis Championship that it could taste it.

However, Mother Nature was not kind to the Seminoles as rain showers forced the tournament indoors, an unfamiliar territory for FSU, and the Seminoles eventually fell 4-2 to the top-seeded Blue Devils Saturday. The match lasted a total of eight hours today.

"I thought our guys played really well indoors and dealing with all the distractions with the delays," said FSU head coach Dwayne Hultquist. "I just think that Duke is a better team than us indoors."

After upsetting No. 11 North Carolina last night, the Seminoles had 12 hours to turnaround and prepare for a feisty Duke squad as the match today was scheduled to start at 9:00 a.m. However, rain showers delayed action for an hour and at approximately 10:00 a.m. the Seminoles and Blue Devils began doubles play.

Duke got on the boards first, winning at courts two and three. Florida State won one doubles match at No. 1, as the No. 21-ranked pair of Ytai Abougzir and Chris Westerhof defeated the No. 22 team of Joey Atas and Jonathan Stokke with ease, 8-5. Abougzir and Westerhof are an impressive 9-3 in their last 12 completed matches.

The two teams started singles play and split 3-3 in the first set before rain showers once again delayed play. Duke and FSU sat out for nearly three hours before officials eventually forced the matches indoors on the campus of the University of North Carolina.

From there, the Blue Devils went up 2-0 when No. 6 Ludovic Walter defeated No. 31 Abougzir in straight sets (6-0, 6-2). Freshman Chris Cloer played perhaps one of the best matches of his career as he defeated Stephen Amritraj 6-3, 0-6, 6-3, as the Seminoles put up their first team point (2-1). Duke answered back at No. 2 as No. 105 Jonathas Sucupira fell in a three-set marathon to No. 58 Stokke by scores of 5-7, 6-2, 6-2.

"Stephen is a senior for Duke so it was great win for Chris Cloer," Hultquist commented. "He played with a lot of energy and poise and did a great job, especially returning serve. I am extremely proud of him."

Despite a trip in the ambulance and a visit to the emergency room due to extreme cramping yesterday, sophomore Sam Chang returned to the courts today and upset No. 81 Peter Rodrigues 7-5, 7-6 to pull the Seminoles within one point at 3-2. However, Duke found a way to win at No. 5 singles against senior Chris Westerhof, as Kiril Dimitrov won in a three-set thriller 2-6, 6-2, 6-4 for the team victory. FSU freshman Maciek Sykut did not finish in the third set of a match versus Joey Atas.

"Jon had beaten Stokke the last time and Chris and Maciek defeated the other guys," Hultquist said. "I felt good about their match-ups. To put it in perspective of how close the match was you have to take in consideration that Chris Westerhof and Maciek were in the third set on serve. It could have easily gone either way today."

Florida State will now await word on its chances of hosting the first and second rounds of the NCAA Tournament. The Seminoles, ranked No. 19, have a good case considering FSU has defeated two top-15 teams in as many weeks and logged a victory against No. 3 Duke in late March. The NCAA will make its selections on May 3.