

Ole Miss Defeats Florida State 4-2 In NCAA Second Round

FSU (18-12) ends the season with the second-best record in the last 11 years for the program.

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OXFORD, Miss. - It was a nail biter until the last moment. Unfortunately for the Seminoles, it was Florida State that came up on the short end.

No. 14 and host Ole Miss improved its record to 22-5 on the season and advanced to the "Sweet 16" with a 4-2 win over the Seminoles Sunday afternoon at the Palmer/Salloum Tennis Center. FSU ended the season with an 18-12 record, the second-best record for the program in the last 11 years.

From the get-go, Florida State was at a disadvantage with a crowd of nearly 400 fans cheering against the Seminoles. However, FSU refused to succumb and fought against the adversity until the very end.

"I really feel like this is a huge home court advantage here at Ole Miss," head coach Dwayne Hultquist said. "They have a nice crowd. They really get on the players and the crowd is very close to the players - sometimes too close. However, I was proud of how hard our guys fought and we really put ourselves in position to win the match"

One of the program's all-time great players, Chris Westerhof, took his final team bow as a Seminole and went out in style. The native of Durban, South Africa, recorded the Seminoles' first point of the day with a 6-3, 6-1 win at No. 5 singles over Robbye Poole. Westerhof's 68 career singles wins puts him at No. 10 on the all-time singles list. With 162 total career wins (singles and doubles victories combined), Westerhof is ranked second.

He and partner Ytai Abougzir will travel to the NCAA Men's Doubles Championship next week.

"Chris wins every big match," Hultquist said, "and if you look at his NCAA record during the last four years it is outstanding. He had a great career at FSU and I think it's fair to say we can always count on him and Maciek [Sykut] during big matches."

And about that rookie Sykut.

The freshman out of Marathon, Fla., ended his first collegiate season with a sparkling 25-13 record including a 10-1 mark in the Seminoles last 13 matches.

"Maciek had a great rookie campaign," said Hultquist. "The No. 4 singles position became our most reliable spot in the lineup."

Florida State dropped the doubles point and lost at No. 1 singles before tying the score up 2-all with wins at Nos. 4 and 5. However, the Rebels pulled out victories at No. 2 and No. 3 singles to put an end to the Seminoles' quest for a repeat appearance at the "Sweet Sixteen."

Abougzir, ranked No. 34 in singles, and Westerhof will travel to the NCAA Singles and Doubles Championship in Palo Alto, Calif., May 22-25. Abougzir is the first FSU player to qualify for both the singles and doubles championships since Brian Stanton did so in 1994.

DOUBLES

- #1 Tveit/Claesson (OM) def. Abougzir/Westerhof (FSU) 8-3
- #2 ten Berge/Di Cesare (OM) vs. Chang/Sucupira (FSU) 7-5
- #3 Poole/Klaeson (OM) def. Sykut/Andrew Bailey (FSU) 8-2

SINGLES

- #1 Erling Tveit (OM) def. Ytai Abougzir (FSU) 6-0, 6-1
- #2 Eric Claesson (OM) def. Jonathas Sucupira (FSU) 6-2, 7-5
- #3 Bram ten Berge (OM) def. Sam Chang (FSU) 7-6(3), 6-4

#4 Maciek Sykut (FSU) def. Juan Pablo Di Cesare (OM) 6-1, 6-4
#5 Chris Westerhof (FSU) def. Robbye Poole (OM) 6-3, 6-1
#6 Jakob Klaeson (OM) vs. Chris Cloer (FSU) 7-6, 4-4, sus.

Order of finish: Doubles - (3, 1); Singles - (1, 5, 4, 2, 3)