

Seminole National Championship Run Ends In Semifinals

Connecticut downs No. 6 FSU 2-0 ending the Tribe's run for the second year in a row.

Dec. 5, 2003

Box Score

Cary, NC - Florida State soccer's first ever trip to the NCAA's College Cup ended Friday to the same team that knocked them out of the 2002 NCAA Tournament. The Connecticut Huskies (15-5-3) used two Kristen Graczyk goals in the second half to stop FSU (17-8-1) 2-0 in the national semifinals. The loss was just the first for FSU to a team other than North Carolina since October 8 and concluded the most successful season in the history of the program.

The game was characterized by missed opportunities for Florida State who created numerous chances but was unable to capitalize. They took 20 shots but only put five on frame. Connecticut, on the other hand, put just four shots on frame but was able to score two of those four chances.

"I want to congratulate the UConn Huskies on their win in the semifinals and advancing to the national championship game," said head coach Patrick Baker. "They did a great job and took away a couple of things we have been pretty good at this year. I still felt like it was a game of chances and we created some very good looks at goal."

"We had 20 shots but unfortunately only five were on goal," said Jez Ratliff. "She (UConn goalkeeper Erin Rice) had some big saves and we couldn't get anything by her. She was a big help to her team. We just weren't getting any breaks as well when it came to finishing. We didn't finish like we were capable."

After a period of adjustment that lasted about 15 minutes, the Seminole offense came alive. It started with an India Trotter ball played in to Leah Gallegos. Rice charged the 50-50 ball but Gallegos pulled the ball back and around the keeper leaving the goal wide open. She crossed into Camie Bybee but the service was just inches high and Bybee wasn't able to put it on frame as the ball went over the crossbar.

A minute later, Katie Beal played an amazing diagonal ball right to the feet of Bybee at the top of the 18. Bybee turned and went in to the back with a 1-v-1 with the goalkeeper. The Oklahoma native tried to chip the charging Rice but the ball was just wide of the far post.

In the 19th minute, Trotter, who was dominant once again in the FSU midfield, made one of the most spectacular plays of the half. She carried the ball from the Seminoles' defensive third all the way to the top of the Huskies' 18. She pulled the trigger aiming for the far post but once again the shot was just wide.

Less than five minutes UConn had its best opportunity of the first half. A soft Huskies' shot was headed inside the Seminole six at the far post. Connecticut freshman Nikki Cross beat the Florida State defense to the ball but she had to run so fast to get there that she and the ball both collided into the post and the ball was cleared away.

On the ensuing counter attack the Seminoles once again found themselves in alone with the UConn keeper. Gallegos was slotted a perfect ball that carried her inside the UConn 18. A defender stepped to her and the super sophomore pulled the ball back and then pushed it past the defender, freeing herself. She took a quick look and fired but the shot was at Rice forcing the keeper to make her first of five saves on the day.

Bybee had another opportunity at a header in the 31st minute. Julia Schnugg and Amber Tollefson combined on the left side. Schnugg went endline and got enough separation to serve a ball into Bybee in the center of the box. The junior's header shot to the far post missed wide.

Seven minutes before half Gallegos had a chance to knock in her 19th goal of the year. A Katie Beal free kick was sent into the box where a scramble ensued when UConn was unable to clear the service. The ball came out to Gallegos who one-timed a low drive just wide of the far post.



India Trotter advances the ball before being tackled by UConn's Niki Cross in the first half of the College Cup semifinals.

"We had our chances today but it seemed like there was a lid on the goal," said Jez Ratliff. "I think knowing that we created those chances was really important but we needed to finish them in a big game."

The second half started just like the first half ended. Eight minutes in FSU was back attacking the Huskies' goal. Schnugg played a ball to Gallegos in the corner of the box on the left side. She took one touch to beat the defender and then bent a brilliant strike to the back post. The ball seemed to be curving right to the top corner but wound up just wide of the post.

The Seminoles best opportunity of the half came in the 62nd minute when Rice had trouble handling a free kick. The senior keeper dropped the ball and Bybee was there for the opportunistic finish. The junior couldn't get much on the shot but it was heading into the empty net before it was cleared out of danger.

Much like the first half when an FSU counter attack almost produced a goal, UConn countered on the Tribe's near miss and scored just 24 seconds later. The goal came on a cross from the right side by Gjertsen to a streaking Graczyk. The junior buried the header in the upper 90 at the near post.

A goal down and their season on the line, the Seminoles moved a third player into the attack as they searched for an equalizer. They almost got it in the 75th minute. Kelly Rowland's long throw-in found Bybee's head. The savvy junior flicked it backwards to Ratliff whose shot once again was just wide.

The chances continued for FSU as the time ticked away. In the 77th minute, Tollefson played a magical ball to India Trotter. The freshman was on the left side of the box and slipped the ball to Bybee who was standing dead center. Trotter tried to pull the trigger but the Huskies' defense swarmed and the shot was blocked.

Another set piece, this one in the right endline just yards in front of the corner flag was sent into the penalty area. It was placed right on to the head of a charging Ratliff, who had a step on her defender. The shot went wide of the post.

"This game was actually similar to our Florida game in the Elite Eight," said Baker. "In that game we were up eight shots to one in the first half. I know we weren't up that much in this game because they had great chances themselves. We were probably a little more frustrated versus Florida because that was more one-way traffic. It was an entertaining game for the crowd because there were chances at both ends. There just seemed to be a game where the first goal was probably going to weight heavily in favor of whoever scored it."

With FSU pushing up in hopes of an equalizer, UConn took advantage of the system and snuck in for its second goal of the game. The 20th of the year and second of the game by Graczyk was the one that sealed the game for Connecticut.

"To go from a 4-4-2 to a 3-4-3 and take some risks were not really comfortable in that system," said Baker. "We exposed ourselves there and give Gjertsen credit for staying composed in the box and finding Graczyk."

Graczyk, a junior from New Mexico, was the difference in a game that saw both teams create chances. She was the only player able to finish on the afternoon and separated herself from the best on college soccer's biggest stage.

"I have watched her (Graczyk) career ever since we recruited her. She's a talent," said Baker. "She has gotten better than what she was as a youth player. I think her ability to face up in tight spaces was probably the most impressive thing about today. She was able to get faced up and either take on or play others in. She is very dangerous, that's for sure."

Although the ending of the 2003 campaign was not what the Seminoles had envisioned, they all took solace in the fact that their two seniors got the chance to play in the College Cup before they graduated. Outside of winning the national championship, getting to the final four was the final piece in the puzzle for Amber Tollefson and injured starter Kristin Boyce.

"I can't say enough good things about this team. They are all my best friends," said Tollefson. "They all worked together to send me and (Kristin) Boyce off with a trip to the final four. They are all champions no matter what the outcome is. We fought every step of the way to get here and you have to give UConn credit but this team is still full of champions."

"Getting here was a tribute to this team and our seniors," said Ratliff. "Going from 1-4 to the College Cup is amazing. We are all disappointed that we didn't win but it says a lot about this team to get here. We created chances but we just couldn't finish today."

The loss in the national semifinal ended the best season in Florida State history. The team not only broke numerous records but they assured themselves of the first Top 10 finish in program history. In just four years, FSU has now been to a College Cup, two Sweet 16's, two ACC Championship finals and four straight NCAA Tournaments. For all the latest news on Seminole soccer please log on to the official athletic site for the Florida State University Department of Athletics at www.seminoles.com.

Soccer Box Score (Final)

2003 Florida State Soccer

#18 UCONN vs #6 Florida State (Dec 05, 2003 at NCAA Semifinals)

UCONN (15-5-3) vs.

Florida State (17-8-1)

Date: Dec 05, 2003 Attendance: 8267

Weather:

Goals by period 1 2 Tot

UCONN..... 0 2 - 2
Florida State..... 0 0 - 0

UCONN

Pos	##	Player	Sh	SOG	G	A
GK	00	Erin Rice.....	-	-	-	-
MF	2	Zahra Jalalian.....	2	-	-	-
MF	4	Kristi Lefebvre.....	-	-	-	-
D	7	Karlyn Miselis.....	-	-	-	-
F	9	Brittany Barakat....	2	-	-	-
MF	11	Meghan Schnur.....	1	-	-	-
F	13	Kristen Graczyk.....	5	3	2	-
F	14	Jessica Gjertsen....	1	1	-	2
MF	19	Nikki Cross.....	2	-	-	-
D	22	Courtney Sands.....	-	-	-	-
D	25	Alisse Kosloski.....	-	-	-	-
----- Substitutes -----						
	3	Jen Zieky.....	-	-	-	-
	6	Kristin Fisher.....	-	-	-	-
	10	Jennifer Sullivan....	-	-	-	-
	16	Kathleen Frank.....	-	-	-	1
	Totals.....		13	4	2	3

UCONN

##	Player	MIN	GA	Saves
00	Erin Rice.....	90:00	0	4
TM	Team.....	0:00	0	1

Shots by period 1 2 Tot

UCONN..... 8 5 - 13
Florida State..... 10 10 - 20

Corner kicks 1 2 Tot

UCONN..... 2 2 - 4
Florida State..... 0 4 - 4

SCORING SUMMARY:

GOAL	Time	Team	Goal Scorer	Assists	Description
1.	62:03	UCONN	Kristen Graczyk (19)	Jessica Gjertsen	Header off cross
2.	81:53	UCONN	Kristen Graczyk (20)	Jessica Gjertsen; Kathleen Frank	14 plays through box, to 6 and back into

CAUTIONS AND EJECTIONS:

YC-UCONN #13 (87:09); YC-FSU #17 (87:09)

Officials: Referee: Bob Martinez; Asst. Referee: Sharon Wheeler; Corey Rockwell;

Alt. Official: Brian Kirkley;

Offsides: UCONN 3, Florida State 0.

Florida State

Pos	##	Player	Sh	SOG	G	A
GK	18	Joy McKenzie.....	-	-	-	-
MF	2	Amber Tollefson.....	1	-	-	-
D	3	Teresa Rivera.....	-	-	-	-
MF	5	Jez Ratliff.....	2	-	-	-
F	6	Julia Schnugg.....	-	-	-	-
D	10	Kelly Rowland.....	3	1	-	-
F	13	Leah Gallegos.....	4	2	-	-
MF	15	Camie Bybee.....	6	1	-	-
D	17	Marion Cagle.....	1	-	-	-
D	20	Katie Beal.....	-	-	-	-
MF	28	India Trotter.....	2	-	-	-
----- Substitutes -----						
	8	Alli Ferreri.....	-	-	-	-
	11	Ali Wean.....	-	-	-	-
	14	Rachel McDowell.....	1	1	-	-
	22	Toby Ranck.....	-	-	-	-
	Totals.....		20	5	0	0

Florida State

##	Player	MIN	GA	Saves
18	Joy McKenzie.....	90:00	2	2

Saves by period 1 2 Tot

UCONN..... 1 4 - 5
Florida State..... 1 1 - 2

Fouls 1 2 Tot

UCONN..... 8 7 - 15
Florida State..... 7 7 - 14

Referee signature