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FIFTH-RANKED FSU MOVES TO 2-0 WITH VICTORY OVER SOUTHERN CAL Senior captains Katie Beal and Jez Ratliff lead the way as Tribe completes perfect weekend.

Tallahassee, FL – For the second straight game the fifth-ranked Florida State soccer team (2-0-0) fell behind to a Pac-10 power and found a way to comeback and win. Sunday afternoon Southern Cal (1-1-0) took an early 1-0 lead only to watch FSU once again equalize a game on a set piece and then win the game with a goal in the run of play. The 2-1 victory moves FSU to 2-0 for the first time since 2001 and gives head coach Patrick Baker the 70th win of his FSU career.

"I thought the USC game plan was just terrific," said Baker. "I think they took the scouting report and applied it perfectly. We started Rachel McDowell in the midfield to provide us with some possession and I thought that was a key move. Leah (Gallegos) elevated her game today and that was a big factor. Also, I have to credit coach Thompson (goalkeeper coach Rob Thompson) because five minutes into the second half he suggested we put Jez (Ratliff) up top and slide Julia (Schnugg) in. Putting Jez up top was the difference in how we turned the game around.

"I think it says a lot about this team's mentality that we have come back twice from one goal deficits. We are still very methodical and have answered opponent's goals at very important times. It is just fantastic. It isn't something you want to do a lot but we are going to take everybody's best shot this year. We took Arizona State's best shot and we took Southern Cal's best shot. We managed to find ways to win against two very good teams. These are huge boosts for us."

Sunday was a day for the Seminole seniors as Camie Bybee drew a penalty kick that fellow senior Katie Beal converted to even the game at 1-1. Then senior captain Jez Ratliff scored the fourth game-winning goal of her career in the 61st minute to seal the win. Florida State has now started a season 2-0 six times and the Seminoles have never lost a game after winning their opener in 11 years. The 2-0 start is a welcome contrast to opening weekend 2003 when USC and Penn State came to Tallahassee and handed FSU two losses, which eventually led to a 1-4 start.

"It was similar to the Arizona State game in that the timing of the equalizer was important," said Bybee. "It gave us new life in the second half."

"This is an experienced team with so many players back," said Baker. "We have preached that this is the season. With so many home games and the team that we have, this has the potential to be that special season we have been missing. Getting off to a 2-0 start against two teams as good as Arizona State and USC is a great way to begin chasing that goal."

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Despite falling behind, the Tribe got off to a good early start almost getting on the board in the sixth minute. Marion Cagle played a great wide ball to Julia Schnugg. The sophomore turned and ran at goal but her shot was right at USC starting keeper Julie Peterson.

In the 11th minute another wide attack almost resulted in a Florida State goal. Kelly Rowland played a long ball out wide to Ratliff. She got end line and her service found Bybee inside the box. The senior couldn't put the shot on frame though as the game remained 0-0.

In the 21st minute an FSU foul called on Rowland led to a Trojan goal. The foul was called about 19 yards away right where the penalty box met the endline on the left side. Rosa Anna Tantillo played a great ball to the back post where Kelly Blais headed home the goal.

"There was a lot of chaos and I blame myself because I don't think we needed as many people in the wall as were there," said all-region goalkeeper Joy McKenzie. "They slipped a ball over and in the midst of all the congestion and the height they bring to the game, the girl just got a head on it. There it was 1-0."

The Tribe was unable to muster much of an offensive threat until the 38th minute when they had two great opportunities back-to-back. Gallegos had two shots from close range. The first one was blocked by Lauren Shepherdson. The rebound came right back to the preseason All-American but her shot was just wide at the far post.

Less than four minutes out of halftime Florida State equalized the game. Camie Bybee received a pass about 20 yards from goal. She ran across the top of the box and then turned into the penalty area with the ball at her feet. Just as she got about three yards in, Bybee was taken down on a high tackle giving the Tribe a penalty kick. Katie Beal stepped up and buried the PK to tie the game at 1-1.

"I picked up the ball about 25 yards out and was able to get around one player," said Bybee. "The defenders kept coming so I kept dribbling across the box looking for someone to lay the ball off to. I finally managed to get myself in the box and as I was about to shoot they got me from behind."

"First of all, Camie did all the hard work on that play," said Beal. "For her to beat four players and manufacture that opportunity was amazing. I just stepped up and concentrated. I just tried to do my best to put it in the back of the net."

Although Bybee's play didn't show up in the box score, it was the second straight game in which she has either scored or set up the equalizer. The senior's play in the midfield has been one of the key's to FSU's 2-0 start.

"It is hard to assess your own play but I think I am doing OK," said Bybee. "It is just the first weekend and I just want to keep contributing and helping this team more and more each time out."

CON'T

"She (Bybee) has had a great start to the season," said Baker. "I told Scott French at *Soccer America* that she is so underappreciated by people outside of this program but not by me. I would play with Camie Bybee any day of the week. If I am picking a team I want her because she wins and she makes things happen. She has developed here a great deal. She is very talented."

Just 22 seconds after the Tribe tied, USC came right back and almost went back on top. Tracy Lansing got free down the right side and moved to goal. She blasted a shot to the near side that caught the outside of the post and careened clear across the field.

Florida State had its first chance to take the lead in the 56th when Bybee sprung Ratliff free down the left flank. She ran to goal and pulled back passing a square ball to Gallegos in the center of the box. The junior couldn't pull the trigger but she collected the ball and passed it to Toby Ranck who floated a pass to the back post, which just sailed over the head of Ratliff.

Four minutes later the Tribe had another opportunity and this time they capitalized. Teresa Rivera started the scoring play by feeding Rachel McDowell down the left wing. She sent a ball into the box but a USC defender was waiting right there to intercept the pass. Gallegos fought her way around the defender to win the ball. She turned endline and tiptoed past two defenders. She then found Ratliff near the back post where she finished the chance.

"The play went in slow motion for me and I got a good read," said Gallegos. "I was already going in that direction and the USC defender had a touch that got away from her a little. I snuck around her and I saw Jez open. My shot was blocked off and I just wanted to get the ball to someone who had a chance to score. I tried to get her the cleanest pass I could. Luckily it got to her and she finished well."

"Leah and I had got in a couple times before that by combining," said Ratliff. "I saw her get down to the corner on that play and she was dribbling down the line. The goalie was on the near post and I was hoping that she would send it back and she did. Leah did all the hard work and then made a great pass making it an easy finish for me."

With 8:03 remaining the game was stopped for a two-plus hour weather delay. When the teams retook the field, USC had one last chance to try and force OT but just like Friday night, a big time McKenzie save once again preserved a win as Kelly Blais' shot was knocked over the cross bar by the senior keeper.

"The delay was tough for both teams," said Baker. "I wanted to make sure we got those eight minutes in so it was a full 90 minute game. I am glad we got it in. They had one chance and outside of that they didn't force Joy into any other big saves. We did a better job managing the clock than we did on Friday so we are learning."

Florida State will hit the road this work for one of just four road trips. The Seminoles will head to Coral Gables to open ACC play versus new conference rival Miami (0-2-0, 0-1-0). The game will

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be played Friday, September 3 at 7:00 p.m. and live stats will be available. The Seminoles then head to Boca Raton to face FAU Sunday at 1:00 p.m.

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Soccer Box Score (Final) 2004 Florida State Soccer

USC vs #5 Florida State (Aug 29, 2004 at Tallahassee, FL)

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