

GAINESVILLE—Red-haired Lou Merchant, stealing a page in history from another Florida guard named Joe Hobbs, swished a 20-foot jump shot with 24 seconds left last night to give the Gators a frantic 75-74 basketball victory over rival Florida State.

It was hard-luck FSU's third last-seconds loss to the Gators in the Seminoles last four Gainesville appearances. Last-minute points by Hobbs had doomed the Tribe, 67-65, here in 1957 and again in 1958, 71-70.

Merchant assumed the role here last night as the resourceful Gators completed a perfect nine-game home sweep before a crowd of 7,000. Florida is 19-0 overall, FSU absorbed its ninth loss against 12 triumphs this season.

Coach Bud Kennedy's Tribe fought from 12 points behind in the first half and had a 74-73 lead after junior star Dave Fedor stole the ball and drove in to literally stuff the ball in the basket with 42 seconds left.

Florida came back down the court, worked the ball carefully to Merchant, and the game's high scorer (30 points) tossed in his 12th field goal of the night to put Florida ahead by one with 24 seconds left.

FSU quickly called a time out. Kennedy's bench strategy was for the Tribe to try to clear a man off a double screen for a good shot. In any event, the Seminole with the ball with eight seconds left would fire for a game-winning bucket. If the shot missed, there might still be time for a last-ditch follow shot.

There was 0:21 left when FSU put the ball in play.

The Seminoles brought the ball down. Guard Jack Davis fed off to Fedor on the side. Checked closely, Fedor whipped it back to Davis out front. Davis shoveled it to guard Tim Edney. Seven-teen seconds had elapsed.

With four seconds left, Edney started a drive for the basket. Followed closely by the Gators George Jung. Edney never got a shot away as the time ran out.

Unexplainably, the Seminoles failed to shoot in the final 21 seconds they had the ball.

It was a heartbreaking loss for the Seminoles, who had bowed to Florida by seven points at Tallahassee in December. With Merchant's vital basket, FSU's hopes of equaring that loss and spoiling the Gator's unallied Florida Gym record went down the drain.

Twenty of Merchant's 30 points came in the first half. Center Cliff Loyk, who fouled out with 2:40 left, had 18 points and Bobby Shiver 10.

Fedor, hitting double figures for the 46th straight game, sparked the Seminoles with 24 points.

13 in the final half. Center Ray Swain contributed 17 points and soph forward Charlie Long added 13.

Fedor was the game's top rebounder with 15 as FSU out-rebounded the Gators, 46-14. The Seminoles also came up with better shooting percentages from both the field and free throw line.

FSU made 33 of 50 floor attempts (66.0 per cent), but Florida got away 21 more shots (24 of 71) for 30.4 per cent. FSU dropped in 24 of 38 free throws while Florida hit 19 of 29 foul shots.

It was the highest losing point total for the Seminoles, who have

dropped five of their nine losses by seven points or less.

The lead changed 11 times and the score was tied nine times last night. After early deadlocks at 7-all and 11-11, Florida bolted into a 35-23 advantage on Layk's tipin with 7:37 left in the opening half. But with Fedor and Long hitting, the Seminoles outpointed their hosts, 19-7 in the next seven minutes and went to the dressing room at intermission with a 42-42 tie.

Two quick Merchant baskets propelled the Gators to a 44-42 lead after one minute in the second half but Swaine hit a push shot and Davis a pair of

FLA. STATE	FG	FT	PF	TP
Fedor	7-11	10-11	4	24
Long	6-12	1-3	4	13
Swain	5-12	7-10	2	17
Davis	0-2	3-4	2	3
Ashworth	1-4	3-3	5	5
Smith	1-3	2-2	0	4
Coogie	1-2	1-1	4	3
Edney	2-4	1-2	1	5
Totals	33-50	25-32	22	74
FLORIDA	FG	FT	PF	TP
Metzger	2-5	1-1	1	5
Jung	3-8	3-4	3	9
Layk	1-11	4-8	5	18
Merchant	12-24	6-8	1	30
Shiver	2-14	1-5	3	16
Foh	1-2	1-3	1	3
Murphy	0-2	0-0	1	0
Totals	28-71	19-29	15	73
Florida State				42-42-74
Florida				42-42-73
Attendance: 7,000.				
Woodrow	0	1-1	3	1
Zabinski	2	1-2	2	5
Clark	4	1-3	1	9
Lovell	11	2-3	2	24
Butler	0	3-3	1	9
Dyer	1	0-1	1	2
Broughton	0	0-0	0	0
TOTALS	28	8-13	10	50
FLA. FROSH	FG	FT	PF	TP
Stokes	4	2-4	2	10
Moeton	4	1-4	4	13
Clark	5	1-2	2	11
Wilson	4	1-1	1	9
Patterson	4	2-3	2	10
Mohler	0	0-0	0	0
Bolder	0	0-0	0	0
TOTALS	21	7-14	11	53
FSU Frosh				33-27-52
Florida Frosh				28-25-53