

Gators defeat FSU

By George Maselli
Democrat staff writer

What does a right-handed hitter do when he's struck out three straight times? He hits left-handed and belts a long, game-winning home run.

Who does a coach call on to pitch the tough innings in a close game in a hostile environment? A pitcher who hasn't thrown in a game since March 10.

That's how it goes against a team in a spin. That's how it went against Florida State in a 6-3 loss Tuesday night to the Florida Gators. A crowd of 2,953 ignored the unseasonable cold to watch.

Scott Ruskin, who FSU is thankful is a senior, bombed a long solo homer hitting left-handed to touch off Florida's winning three-run eighth inning. Steve Rosenberg, a left-hander who has been missing in action for Florida for three weeks, pitched the last 3½ innings, allowing no hits, two walks. He struck out seven Seminoles.

The Seminoles, 32-14 after three straight losses, host Jacksonville tonight. The Gators, No. 15 in the ESPN-Collegiate Baseball poll, came to town having lost three of their last four. They are now 27-8

after winning the season series from FSU three games to one.

"This could be a very big win when the (NCAA) Selection Committee gets together and asks who won this series. We did," said Florida Coach Joe Arnold.

FSU Coach Mike Martin downplayed that notion.

"I'm not concerned about anything," said Martin in the wake an emotional last-inning loss to Memphis State on Sunday. "I'm tickled to death with the emotion our guys played with. It was a good college baseball game."

As in the Rosenberg and Ruskin examples, the Seminoles didn't catch many breaks Tuesday night. In the first inning against Florida starter Jeff Fischer with two out and two on, Paul Sorrento smacked a line drive heading into right field. Florida second baseman Tim Touma went way up to spear it.

In the second inning, with one on and none out, Keith Kidd hit a ground ball to short. Florida short-stop Chris Lombardozi kicked the ball right to second baseman Touma for a force out. In the third inning with two out and two runners on, Jose Marzan hit a long drive that was caught at the left-field wall.

The Gators took a 3-1 lead against FSU starter Kevin Smith with a two-run homer by Mike Stanley in the fifth. It was a frustrating Seminole Stadium home run, a fly that just went over the short porch in right.

The Seminoles tied it with solo homers by Luis Alicea and Keith Kidd — neither particularly long, but to right — in the fifth and sixth.

Smith, who Martin said had his best outing of the season, hung tough into the eighth. But Ruskin, whom Smith had struck out three straight times, led off the inning

with a homer.

"I told him, 'Hey, you're not hitting this guy right-handed, so why don't you try him left-handed,'" said Arnold.

"I usually switch-hit when we have a comfortable lead, but tonight was an exception after my first three at-bats," said Ruskin.

The Gators also added two more runs in the inning — one on a bad-hop single — and were robbed of much more on a brilliant catch at the wall in center by Eric Mangham. Rosenberg took care of the rest. But why hasn't a guy with an arm like that pitched more often?

"The other guys have been doing the job. That's all I can say," said Rosenberg.

After hearing a noisy Gator celebration at the end, some Seminoles had something to say.

"Man, I'm fired up," said Mangham, who also made a sprawling catch of a line drive in the fourth inning. "We better not see those guys again in the regional. That's all I can say."

Florida					Florida State				
	ab	r	h	bi		ab	r	h	bi
Lusader,rf	3	1	2	1	Alicea,2b	5	2	3	1
Lombrdzz,ss	5	1	2	0	Figueroa,ss	5	0	1	0
Stanley,1b	5	1	3	3	Fazzini,lf	5	0	0	0
Ruskin,cf	5	1	1	1	Jones,1b	3	0	0	0
Brewer,dh	4	1	1	0	Sorrento,dh	2	0	0	0
Touma,2b	3	0	0	0	Calandra,dh	0	0	0	0
Clema,3b	3	1	0	0	Marzan,3b	4	0	1	0
Alou,lf	4	0	1	0	Kidd,rf	4	1	1	1
Floyd,c	0	0	0	0	Blackwell,c	3	0	1	0
Weihs,c	3	0	1	0	Mangham,cf	3	0	0	0
Martinez,ph	0	0	0	1					
Totals	35	6	11	6	Totals	34	3	7	2

Florida	100	020	030	—	6	11	1
Florida State	001	011	000	—	3	7	2

E—Ruskin, Marzan, Alicea. DP—Florida 1. LOB—Florida 8, FSU 9. 2B—Weihs, Lombardozzi. HR—Stanley (7), Alicea (9), Kidd (8), Ruskin (7). S—Touma. SF—Martinez.

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Florida						
Fischer	5 ² / ₃	7	3	2	3	3
Rosenberg, W(1-1)	3 ¹ / ₃	0	0	0	2	7
Florida State						
Smith, L(5-1)	7	8	5	5	3	6
Lewis	2	2	1	1	1	0

WP—Fischer. PB—Weihs. T—2:40. A—2,953.