

FSU women race past Miami Hurricanes

Florida State had six players score in double figures — even without two of its top five scorers — as UM coach Katie Meier had no answers on defense.

By Michelle Kaufman

BankUnited Center was awash in pink Sunday afternoon as part of the Play 4Kay breast cancer awareness initiative, in memory of former North Carolina State women's basketball coach Kay Yow, who died of cancer in 2009.

The University of Miami players wore pink uniforms. The pep band and cheerleaders wore pink. UM coach Katie Meier wore bright pink sneakers, as did the Florida State players. But there was nothing soft or delicate about the way the teams battled as the 19th-ranked Seminoles rolled over the Canes 93-78.

FSU is the only Division I team of 343 with five players averaging double figures in scoring — and the Seminoles did it again Sunday. In fact, six Noles scored in double figures, and they were missing two of their top five scorers in Chasity Clayton (injured) and Chelsea Davis (disciplinary action). The 93 points were the most FSU has scored against an Atlantic Coast Conference opponent this season, and their 54 percent shooting was their second-best this season.

Leading the way was senior guard Leonor Rodriguez of the Canary Islands, who scored 21 points to go with seven assists and three steals. Alexa Deluzio added 20 points. Natasha Howard was 7 of 10 from the field for 15 points, Yashira Delgado had 14, Lauren Coleman had 11 off the bench and Morgan Toles chipped in 10.

With the win, FSU is 19-4 and 9-3 in the ACC. UM fell to 16-8 and 7-6.

"As frustrated as we are, Florida State did an amazing job of hitting really backbreaking, very timely shots," Meier said. "Six players in double figures — that's really hard to make a game plan against. They did a really nice job of sharing the basketball. I like the fight in my team, but we can't leave that many layups on the rim against the highest-scoring team in the conference. We probably left 40 points up there.

"They were hot in the first half, hot in the second half. They were just hot."

The Seminoles went on a 21-3 run over a 10-minute span in the first half and opened a 15-point lead they held the remainder of the game. They had 13 steals to just four for the Hurricanes and scored 24 points off 20 UM turnovers.

Meier said they tried multiple defenses to no avail. Every time they got within striking distance, the Noles went on a run. The closest UM got was within four points two minutes into the second half, but FSU responded with six points. Back-to-back threes by Deluzio gave FSU a 61-47 lead.

"It was really puzzling," Meier said of her team's struggles. "I'm not at all mad at my team, I'm concerned. There were huge moments, and were good. So, pass, catch and make a layup. That's it. As individuals, they've got to take it a little more personally, be a little less forgiving of themselves when they're missing chippies like that."

Morgan Stroman led UM with 16 points on 7-of-12 shooting and grabbed five rebounds. Shawnice “Pepper” Wilson added 12, and Suriyah McGuire had 10.

Though LeBron James and Dwyane Wade didn’t show up Sunday, as they had for Saturday’s sold-out men’s game against North Carolina, a spirited crowd of 1,589 cheered on the Canes. It is a safe bet to assume the fan who traveled farthest was 11-year-old Jackson Jones, a UM fan from Jacksonville, who brought along five of her fifth-grade teammates as a special birthday celebration. The Hurricanes are home again next Sunday at 2 p.m. against Boston College.

Seminoles flex muscle, rout Clemson

FSU punishes Tigers inside, lights up from outside

Feb 3, 2013 |

Written by

Ira Schoffel

Democrat sports editor

With five players averaging in double-figures scoring, Florida State women's basketball coach Sue Semrau takes comfort in knowing that several Seminoles are capable of having a big game on any given night.

And when all of those players are clicking at the same time, well ... special things can happen. And that's exactly what we saw Sunday at the Civic Center. After opening a double-digit lead early in the second half, FSU pulled away down the stretch to score an 83-61 victory against visiting Clemson.

"It's really fun to be part of a team that is successful because they don't care who gets the credit," Semrau said. "It's a lot of fun."

FSU forwards Chelsea Davis and Natasha Howard pummeled the Tigers inside; they each scored 19 points to lead the Seminoles to a 46-18 edge in points in the paint.

And senior shooting guards Leonor Rodriguez and Alexa Deluzio each added 16 points from the perimeter. Point guard Morgan Toles added 10 points as well.

"It went both ways – I thought the outside game also opened up the inside game," Semrau said, when asked if her post players' inside presence created opportunities for her guards. "That was nice to have everybody on all cylinders."

Clemson (6-15, 2-8 ACC) had some success on offense as well. Led by junior forward Quinyotta Pettaway, who scored 22 points on 8-of-13 shooting, the Tigers shot 43.4 percent from the field and 44.4 percent from 3-point range. They also connected on 11 of 14 free throws.

But after trailing by eight points at halftime, Clemson simply couldn't keep up with FSU in the second half. The Seminoles (18-4, 8-3) combined to hit 16 of their 29 shots from the field in the second half, and they hit 20 of 25 free throws for the game.

The Seminoles now will have a week to prepare for next Sunday's game at Miami. FSU played without senior forward Chasity Clayton (sprained ankle) against Clemson, but Semrau said she hopes Clayton will be back to face the Hurricanes.

Junior forward Natasha Howard also became the 28th player in school history to reach 1,000 points for her career.

Lady 'Noles defeat Tigers 83-61 in offensive success

FSU celebrates individual and team victory

11:34 PM, Feb. 3, 2013 |

Written by

Mat Hooper

After falling to North Carolina Thursday night, the No. 20 Florida State women's basketball team bounced back Sunday afternoon, beating the Clemson Tigers, 83-61. The Seminoles are now 18-4 (8-3).

The first five minutes of the game were sloppy by both teams, but the Seminoles were the first to settle down and take a strong lead that they never gave up. They kept the Tigers at bay and didn't let them come within six points during the second half.

"Having five players in double figures, turning the ball over at a low rate, 18 assists, and all those things I think offensively we saw some success," head coach Sue Semrau said. "For us, we need to improve defensively and we got a week now where we can spend some time on that and get back to basics."

Florida State was without Chasity Clayton, who was day-to-day following the UNC loss, but her fellow forwards stepped up. Junior forward Natasha Howard and senior forward Chelsea Davis both scored 19 points and helped Florida State register 46 points in the paint compared to Clemson's 18.

Howard also grabbed 11 rebounds for her seventh double-double on the season and became the 28th Seminole in the 1,000-point club. The feat came on a free throw make, but it's still quite the accomplishment nonetheless.

"I never thought I would reach 1,000 points in college, but I'm proud of it," Howard said. "I couldn't do it without my teammates and coaching staff. I give all the props to my teammates."

There were a couple other plays that were a little more visually spectacular, though. The first one came early on in the game when senior guard Leonor Rodriguez snake-eyed the entire arena and passed to Davis for an easy lay-in. The other one came when Cheetah Delgado kicked it into a second gear and drove the baseline before throwing the ball up around the basket. The ball flew over the shot clock before somehow finding the net on its way down.

The Seminoles had five players register double digit points, but it was a Tiger that had the best stat line. Their sophomore forward Quinyotta Pettaway finished the game with 22 points and 10 rebounds while also recording 3 blocks. Florida State handled the rest of her team though, having four players with four or more personal fouls.

The game was the annual "Barefoot Game" in which Semrau and the rest of the coaching staff coach barefoot and people get in free for bringing a pair of shoes. The goal is to bring attention to the 300 million children in the world who are without shoes and at risk of infection and diseases.

"Giving back has always been an important part of this program," Semrau said. "It's about more than basketball, and it's important to educate student-athletes on the importance of helping others."

The Seminoles will look to continue to help themselves and their push for the postseason when they take on Miami in Miami.



Find what you are looking for ...

SEARCH

ADVERTISEMENT

FSU women's basketball game will benefit good cause

Semrau, FSU seek shoe donations to help poor



Recommend

Be the first of your friends to recommend this.

Recommend 0

Tweet 0

0

A A



Purchase Image

FSU coach Sue Semrau will coach in bare feet again this Sunday to support Samaritan's Feet. / democrat files

Written by **Ira Schoffel**
Democrat sports editor

FILED UNDER

FSU
FSU Womens Basketball

After a painful loss Thursday night at No. 11 North Carolina, Florida State women's basketball coach Sue Semrau would love to see her team get back on the winning track Sunday against visiting Clemson.

But first things first.

What Semrau hopes to see before the game is hundreds (if not thousands) of FSU fans lining up to donate shoes to Samaritan's Feet, a charitable organization whose mission is to provide footwear for an estimated 300 million people who go without shoes each day.

Semrau, who will coach the game in bare feet to help raise awareness, is hosting a game to benefit Samaritans Feet for the fourth consecutive season.

"We are given so much as a university, and even in America," Semrau said. "So many of

us have more shoes than we even know what to do with. It seems like such a small thing, but it's a health issue. And the opportunity to use a platform like collegiate athletics to bring awareness to those who aren't as fortunate, and who don't have what we have, it's something that I love to take advantage of."

According to the Samaritan's Feet website (Samaritansfeet.org), more than one million people die each year due to illnesses caused by lack of foot protection.

During these past few years, Semrau and her players have not only helped raise awareness and gathered shoes for the organization, they

ADVERTISEMENT

Most Popular

Most Commented

More Headlines

- 1 More than 1,000 people without a home in Tallahassee
- 2 They said what? What you didn't see during the Grammys
- 3 Pope resigning on Feb. 28, conclave in March
- 4 'Curtains' production raises funds, awareness for disease
- 5 1993 class fun facts

Most Viewed

have even helped deliver shoes to the underprivileged.

FSU vs. Duke

- **When/Where:** Sunday, 2 p.m., Civic Center
- **Radio/TV:** 100.7-FM, ESPN3.com

"It's humbling when my team goes out and does a shoe distribution, and you're out there and you see the looks on the faces," Semrau said. "And I went over to Africa and did a shoe

distribution with Manny (Samaritan's Feet founder Emmanuel Ohonme), and it's incredible."

Fans who donate a new pair of shoes at Sunday's game will be admitted to the game for free. They also will be in the running for an autographed basketball.

According to Samaritan's Feet, the charity has helped four million people in 60 countries since its inception in 2003.

Clayton listed as 'day to day'

Senior forward Chasity Clayton, who sprained an ankle Thursday at North Carolina, is listed as "day to day," Semrau said.

PHOTO GALLERIES



Felony arrest Feb. 6



Felony arrest Jan. 30

Spacious 4 Bedroom Suites

www.CottagesAtMagnolia.com
 Quiet Living Minutes from FAMU Your Own Private Suite



AdChoices

ADVERTISEMENT

View Comments (0) | Share your thoughts »

TOP VIDEO PICKS

selected by Taboola

Police Re Examine Firing of Officer Wanted for M...
 Feb 10, 2013

Post Blizzard Clean Up Underway
 Feb 10, 2013

Fears Unrest Will Damage Tunisia's Tou...
 Feb 11, 2013

YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN

Video: FSU's Mike Martin talks lineup, position battles
 (nolesports.com | Tallahassee Democrat | Covering FSU football and Seminoles sports at Florida State University in Tallahassee, FL)

Game week for FSU baseball
 (nolesports.com | Tallahassee Democrat | Covering FSU football and Seminoles sports at Florida State University in Tallahassee, FL)

Calendar (nolesports.com | Tallahassee Democrat | Covering FSU football and Seminoles sports at Florida State University in Tallahassee, FL)

Violinist Hilary Hahn bows up to kick off Seven Days festival
 (nolesports.com | Tallahassee Democrat | Covering FSU football and Seminoles sports at Florida State University in Tallahassee, FL)

SPONSORED LINKS

Grading Every FBS Team's 2013 Recruiting Class (Bleacher Report)

Deion Sanders Intervention: Basketball Mama (Veria)

Brian Kelly signs one of his best classes as Notre Dame's head coach (SI.com)

Gretchen Bleiler (Team USA)

America's Top 5 Football Stadiums (AARP.org)

DeMarcus Ware: 'Even when you hit him, there's no impact' (Red Bull)

[?]



REAL DEALS



SPECIAL SECTIONS

On-the-Move cars publication



Find the best gas prices in town



Active Living magazine



ARCHIVES

View the last seven days

Yesterday, Feb. 10

Saturday, Feb. 09

Friday, Feb. 08

Thursday, Feb. 07

E-NEWSPAPER

Subscribers log in to view a replica of the print edition of the Tallahassee Democrat

'Noles ready for top-20 test at UNC

Jan 30, 2013 |

Written by

Ira Schoffel

Democrat sports editor

The curiosity has been gnawing at Florida State women's basketball coach Sue Semrau all week.

Not only is tonight's game at No. 11 North Carolina a chance for the No. 20 Seminoles to prove they are back among the elite programs in the ACC, but it also offers a unique matchup of powerful teams with varying strengths and weaknesses.

While the Seminoles' strength is in their quickness and athleticism, North Carolina's front court is led by 6-foot-6 center Waltiea Rolle and 6-2 forward Xylina McDaniel.

"They have a lot of depth and a lot of size," Semrau said, "and we have five players that are capable of scoring in double-figures. We play the same style, but we don't play with the same ingredients by any stretch. They're bigger all the way across the board than we are."

The Seminoles (17-3, 7-2 ACC) and Tar Heels (19-2, 7-1) both like to push the pace on offense, but as Semrau said, they accomplish that goal through different means.

While Florida State will mix up its defenses, playing a lot of zone and trapping to create fast-break opportunities, North Carolina plays an aggressive man-to-man attack.

The Tar Heels lead the conference with 14.7 steals per game, and they boast three of the ACC's top individual spots in that category. Tierra Ruffin-Pratt, Krista Gross and McDaniel average 2.7, 2.6 and 2.5 steals respectively, and Brittany Rountree ranks 10th with 2.2.

While acknowledging that it will quite be a challenge, the Seminoles like their chances of executing their high-octane offense – especially if they can get their transition game going.

"We're going to try to use our quickness and speed against them," FSU senior Alexa Deluzio said.

Part of the reason for that confidence stems, ironically, from a loss. When the Seminoles played at Maryland in early January, they struggled in the first half against a similarly large and deep Terrapins squad.

But after falling behind by 16 points at halftime, FSU's players settled down and made it a game down the stretch.

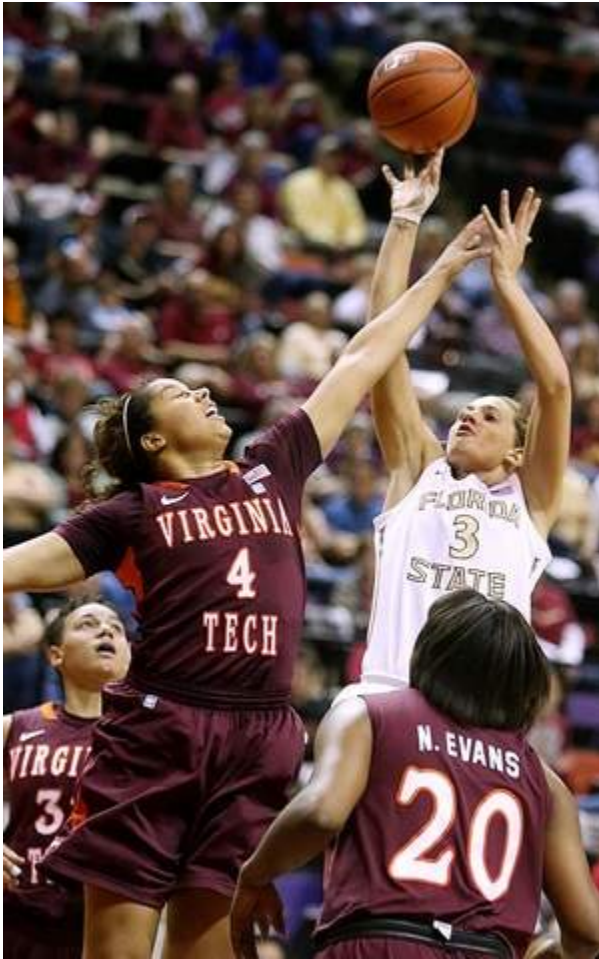
"I think the Maryland game was a great game for us because it showed we can compete with bigger teams like that," Deluzio said. "Now that we played the second half like that, hopefully we can play two halves like that in the UNC game."

"That game told them, 'You guys can get out there and compete with anybody,'" Semrau said.

FSU finishes off Hokies with late run

Written by Ira Schoffel Democrat sports editor
Jan. 27

tallahassee.com



Purchase Image

FSU's Alexa Deluzio shoots over Virginia Tech's Hannah Young in the first half. The Florida State Seminoles used a late shooting spree to beat the visiting Virginia Tech Hokies 70-56 at the civic center on Sunday, January 27, 2013. / Mike Ewen/Democrat

After watching her team swat away visiting Virginia Tech with a powerful second-half surge, Florida State women's basketball coach Sue Semrau finally took a moment Sunday afternoon to exhale.

But she knows that feeling won't last long.

Her Seminoles finished the first half of the ACC schedule with a 70-56 victory against the Hokies to improve to 17-3 overall and 7-2 in the Atlantic Coast Conference. It marks a dramatic turnaround from one year ago, when the Seminoles were below .500 in conference play through nine games.

But on Thursday, the No. 21 Seminoles will open the second half of the season at No. 16 North Carolina – one of the other three teams in a logjam atop the ACC standings.

"We've learned a lot," Semrau said. "And now we can put that behind us and focus in a new direction. (This will be) a big, big game. I know my players enjoy that. We as a coaching staff enjoy it. It's a tough place to play up there, but we've won there before. And we expect to go up and have a great game."

FSU has reason to be confident, having won five straight ACC games. Those victories haven't all been convincing, but the Seminoles have shown an impressive ability to close out games.

FSU's Alexa Deluzio shoots over Virginia Tech's Hannah Young in the first half. The Florida State Seminoles used a late shooting spree to beat the visiting Virginia Tech Hokies 70-56 at the civic center on Sunday, January 27, 2013.

On Sunday, after Virginia Tech tied the game at 45-45 with about nine minutes left, the 'Noles went on a 16-3 run to put the game out of reach. They did it by fixing the two issues that kept it close in the first place – they eliminated their turnovers and started making their free throws.

After committing 12 turnovers in the first half, the Seminoles had just five in the second. And they connected on 13 of 16 free throws in the second half after making just 6 of 11 in the first.

"We talked about that at half time ... they put us at the line a lot in the first half," Semrau said. "We didn't have a great free-throw shooting output in the last game against Georgia Tech. And to shoot 70 percent (19 of 27) in a game like this was vital."

The Seminoles also stepped up their defense, limiting the Hokies (7-12, 1-7) to three points over a stretch of nearly six minutes.

"We focused in," senior forward Chasity Clayton said. "We knew we had to get stops."

FSU again was led by balanced scoring, with senior forward Chelsea Davis leading the way with 19 points. Senior guard Leonor Rodriguez added 14, senior guard Alexa Deluzio scored 13, and Clayton had 12.

The Seminoles were only the second team to score 70 points against Virginia Tech all season; the Hokies' opponents are averaging just 54.1 points per game.

 **ESPN.com:** Women's College Basketball

[[Print without images](#)] 

Thursday, January 24, 2013
Updated: January 25, 2:50 PM ET

Rodriguez emerges as FSU star

By Graham Hays
espnW

NEWTON, Mass. -- As her senior season at Florida State enters its final months, Leonor Rodriguez has figured out quite a bit about a country she never set foot in before she showed up in Tallahassee as a freshman.



Leonor Rodriguez ranks third in the ACC with 16.2 ppg and 11th with a 51.5 field goal percentage.

But on a recent road trip to Boston College she found herself once again flummoxed. The culprit proved to be hot apple cider offered to counteract the New England chill.

Hot drinks? Sure. Apple juice? Nothing strange there. (Best not to confuse matters more with the distinction between juice and cider.) Hot apple juice? That took some explaining from teammates used to playing cultural attache.

"If I didn't know something, I've never been afraid to ask," Rodriguez said. "I asked a lot of questions -- and I still do. And they still laugh at me."

“

She sees things that can develop like nobody else on our team. She's not reacting; she's creating. It's like a real cook versus somebody that's going off of a recipe. You put her in the kitchen and she's going to find something that makes it even better than what it said on that recipe card.

” -- *FSU coach Sue Semrau on Leonor Rodriguez*

It might seem at first glance as if one of the season's biggest surprises came out of nowhere to emerge as one of the best players in the ACC. But for someone who crossed an ocean just to get to Florida State four years ago, a senior season to remember turns out to be one more leg of a long journey.

Rodriguez comes from a place people dream of visiting for a few days' respite from the real world. Where she grew up, others hope they might someday soak up the sun in retirement. So frankly, it's a little surprising to sit across from her in a hotel lobby on a wet winter night near Boston and find that there is nowhere she would rather be than where she is, with three years worth of waiting and working behind her to prove her point.

Part of Spain, the Canary Islands that Rodriguez calls home are a group of seven islands that together form one of the country's 17 autonomous regions, loosely similar to American states. The islands are considerably closer to the coast of Western Sahara and Morocco than they are to Spain, sitting less than 100 miles off the African mainland. That lends the islands the climate and geography that make them a European vacation destination akin to Hawaii.

"It's kind of like a paradise," Rodriguez said. "It's between 60 and 80 [degrees] year round. You have beaches on the coast, mountains -- you have everything. It's like a little paradise that has everything in one."

It's also where she started playing the sport, at first just tagging along with an older sister to a basketball club on her island of Gran Canaria. When she was young, she played to be among her friends, but as they got older and drifted away from sports to prepare for university in a European model in which the two are less easily intermingled, she wanted both. The teen with the flashy handle on the court who always seemed to be studying when she was off the court charmed Brooke Wyckoff, an American playing professionally for the senior club. When the latter's former college coach, Sue Semrau, visited the Canary Islands, Wyckoff told her there was a girl who might be the real deal.

Semrau never had an opportunity to see her play in person, but on the strength of the recommendation and Rodriguez's record in the Spanish youth national system, she offered her a scholarship.

And so amidst all the vacationers arriving in paradise, Rodriguez caught an outbound flight for the pittance of Florida -- thinking she would find the state's famed beaches when she arrived.

It was a challenge from the start. She had to sit out the first nine games of her freshman season because she played with professional players on her club team. She struggled to adapt to the physical play in the United States, small things like getting bumped four or five times coming over a screen when any one of them would have been a foul back home. She continued to have success with the Spanish national program during the summers, playing for the under-20 team after her freshman and sophomore seasons, but she scored a total of 45 points in her first two seasons with the Seminoles. Semrau wondered if she would be able to adapt. Rodriguez wondered if the frustration was worth it.



Leonor Rodriguez grew up in the Canary Islands and has starred for Spanish national teams since high school.

"For sure, and especially when I was by myself and didn't have a family here," Rodriguez said. "For sure, some days it was tough, and some days I felt like I wanted to give up, but that's not me. I believe in myself, I know what I can bring, I know what I can do. I just needed more time to work on and to adjust to this style of game.

"I think because of the past years, that's why I am where I am right now."

She got an opportunity to start 24 games last season when the Seminoles found themselves shorthanded in the backcourt. The results weren't bad. Rodriguez finished the season as the team's leader in assists and shot 38 percent from the 3-point line. But averages of 4.8 points, 2.7 assists and 2.8 rebounds on a team that finished 14-17, Florida State's first losing season in a decade, didn't mark her for stardom. Semrau assumed that with Morgan Toles healthy and supported at point guard by junior-college transfer Yashira Delgado, Alexa Deluzio

ch, a quiet way to wrap up a career.



SUPER SENIOR

A look at how much Leonor Rodriguez's stats have improved in her career at Florida State:

Season PPG FG %

2012-13	16.2	.515
2011-12	4.8	.434
2010-11	2.8	.385
2009-10	2.7	.500

Semrau noticed when Rodriguez got off to a strong start once practice began. She noticed when it continued. And at some point in those weeks, she realize she had to change her plans. Rodriguez is one of only two Seminoles to start every game this season. No one has played more minutes. There isn't any physical change player or coaches can point to in explaining the success. What comes up again and again is confidence, a difficult commodity to quantify.

"I think that when you play with confidence and you play with what I can only describe as freedom, it makes you lighter on your feet, it makes you look quicker," said Wyckoff, who was reunited with Rodriguez when she joined the Florida State coaching staff last season. "When your mind is freed up to just play, you're able to anticipate and go get that steal. She did work, but these four years she's always worked on her body. & I think it's more of that freedom, that lightness. It's partly confidence, and when you're playing free, it translates physically."

As of Jan. 20, no guard anywhere had a better field goal percentage than Rodriguez at 51.5 percent. She's shooting 43.8 percent from the 3-point line. She leads the team and ranks third in the ACC at 16.3 points per game. Her career average until this season was 3.9 points per game. Florida State might be the only team in the NCAA with five players averaging double-digit points, but that balance fueling a 15-3 turnaround has a lot to do with one unexpected part.

"She sees things that can develop like nobody else on our team," Semrau said. "She's not reacting; she's creating. It's like a real cook versus somebody that's going off of a recipe. You put her in the kitchen and she's going to

find something that makes it even better than what it said on that recipe card. That's why I think she's so much fun to watch play, and she's extremely fun to play with as a result."

Had Rodriguez closed her career in relative anonymity as a reserve, Semrau said she still would have counted the Spaniard's stay in Tallahassee a success for what she brought to the team off the court. It's a familiar line, but when it's echoed with equal passion by someone like Deluzio, it carries some weight. And the frustration of not playing much in those early years aside, Rodriguez shares the assessment of her time in Florida.

Coming to the United States made her miss home more, sure, but in her mind it also helped her understand why it mattered to her where she was from.

"Coming here has opened everything to me," Rodriguez said. "I think traveling around the world, it has opened my mind. I'm with teammates I would never have met, backgrounds I've never experienced and places I would never be. I'm pretty lucky to meet the people I've met and to consider friends here and family. & I'm really happy. I wish everyone could experience this."

That would be true even if she wasn't one of the ACC's leading scorers and the cornerstone of a team with aspirations to not just return to the NCAA tournament but make some noise in it. It's nonetheless nice to have both.

"It's blown everybody away, and it's just been what everyone wanted for Leo," Wyckoff said. "She wanted it badly enough for herself to make it happen, and the coolest thing is that everybody else wanted it for her. So that's what just makes it so amazing. No one expected it."

Which is not to say it came out of nowhere. The farther she gets on her journey, the more she understands exactly where it came from.

"I'm proud to be a Canary Island girl," Rodriguez said.



FSU star-turned-assistant coach Brooke Wyckoff befriended a young Leonor Rodriguez when Wyckoff was playing professionally in the Canary Islands.

Davis becoming 'big dog' for Seminoles

Written by Corey Clark NoleSports.com editor
Feb. 03

tallahassee.com



FSU's Chelsea Davis drives hard to the basket against Miami earlier this month. / Mike Ewen/Democrat

Seminoles.

“I think more than anything it’s her mentality that has changed,” said Semrau, whose team takes on Georgia Tech tonight at the Civic Center. “Up until recently she was pretty content doing things that came to her. She got the ball; she’d find a way to score. But now, she’s much more aggressive as to wanting to have the ball. Demanding the ball.”

The 6-foot-2 Delaware native is averaging a career-high 13.1 points and 5.8 rebounds in 22.3 minutes per game this season. Over the last five contests, Davis is averaging 16 points and eight rebounds per game – collecting two double-doubles along the way. She had just one in her first three years.

“It feels amazing,” Davis said. “I sat down with the coaches before the season and we talked about the things I was good at and the things I wasn’t so good at. And my rebounding percentage last year definitely wasn’t as high as I would have liked.”

Davis averaged just four boards per game last season and 3.4 as a sophomore. She did average 9.2 points a year ago, and had routinely shown flashes of being a dominant low post player on the offensive end. But this year Davis has

FSU vs.
Georgia Tech

- When/where:
Today, 7 p.m.,
Civic Center
- Radio: 1270
AM

Chelsea Davis has always been able to score.

Florida State head coach Sue Semrau said the senior forward might just be the most skilled post player she’s ever coached.

But not until this year, and maybe even specifically this last month, has Davis started to become a dominating presence for the No. 21

been much more consistent, scoring in double figures 13 times already. Because she has been much more aggressive.

“She is one of the most content human beings I’ve ever been around,” Semrau said. “And I say that in a good way. She will out-live all of us because of her stress-level. And so she’s had to learn how to handle the tension we create and really done an admirable job this year.”

“I don’t like stress,” Davis said with a smile.

“I try to steer away from it as much as possible ... But my coach (assistant Lance White) was telling me over and over again that I’ve got to be a ‘Big dog.’ I just know in order to win games – which is what we need – somebody’s got to put that ball in the hoop. So I took the initiative.”

Florida State Seminoles roll over Miami Hurricanes women

The Hurricanes came into Tallahassee looking to upset the Seminoles but instead fell behind early and were routed Sunday afternoon.

By Patrik Nohe
Miami Herald Writer

TALLAHASSEE -- Coming into Sunday afternoon's game against rival Florida State, the the University of Miami had an upset on its minds.

It would be a tough task, however — the 24th-ranked Hurricanes had just won once in the past 11 games on the 18th-ranked Seminoles' home court.

The upset bid lasted all of 30 seconds.

After senior forward Morgan Stroman connected on a jumper to open the scoring, FSU used an 11-4 run to jump ahead and never looked back en route to a 86-65 victory.

"Florida State's just really, really good," Miami coach Katie Meier said. "Of all the teams I've seen on film this year — and we've played a heck of a schedule — but of all the teams I've seen on film and [we've] played against live, their pace of play is the highest."

After Miami (12-4, 3-2 Atlantic Coast Conference) closed the gap to 11-10 with 14 minutes left to play in the first half, the Seminoles ripped off another 11-4 run to take control of the game.

While the Seminoles (13-3, 3-2) shot 51.4 percent in the first half, their strong defensive effort held UM to just 31.4 percent shooting, and the Hurricanes went into the locker room trailing 42-29. UM's leading scorer, senior guard Stefanie Yderstrom, was held to three points in the first half.

"They were putting a lot of pressure on our guards and I ended up a lot on the weakside, I didn't get as many looks as I usually get," Yderstrom said. "When they get on a run like they did in the first half, we can't let that happen, we can't all of the sudden be down 16 points."

It was seven minutes into the second half before Yderstrom found her rhythm, connecting on a jumper and then hitting a couple of threes over the next several minutes. But by then it was too late; FSU had jumped out to a commanding lead, and the Hurricanes couldn't claw their way back into the game.

"That was a great defensive effort by my team," FSU coach Sue Semrau said. "They really came back from a tough loss and worked hard in practice."

UM was led by Stroman's 18 points. Senior center Shawnice Williams added 15, and Yderstrom finished with 11.

Junior Natasha Howard recorded 20 points and nine rebounds, and senior Chelsea Davis had a double-double with 13 points and 13 rebounds to help the Seminoles dominate in the paint.

In all, four Seminoles reached double-digit scoring, including senior guard Leonor Rodriguez, who led the way with 21 as FSU shot 50.7 percent for the game.

Miami will look for a chance to avenge the loss when FSU visits Coral Gables in a little more than a month.

“Defensively we’ve got a lot to fix,” Meier said. “We’ve got to figure that out.”

Storm Chasers: FSU defense smothers Miami in 86-65 romp

10:52 PM, Jan 13, 2013 |

Comments

Written by

Ira Schoffel

Democrat sports editor

The Florida State women's basketball team knows it can win a lot of games with its high-scoring offense.

The 18th-ranked Seminoles rank first in the Atlantic Coast Conference for scoring offense, and they're among the national leaders in numerous offensive categories.

But when the Seminoles are able to throw in some inspired defense and rebounding, truly special things can happen. And that's exactly what took place Sunday afternoon in the Civic Center, as FSU dominated rival Miami in every way imaginable and ran away with an 86-65 victory that was never close.

It was the Seminoles' biggest win in the series since they beat Miami by 25 in 2005-06, and it broke a three-game win streak by the Hurricanes.

"Great defensive effort by my team," FSU coach Sue Semrau said. "They really came back from a tough loss and worked hard in practice, and that was the difference. The result — against a very good Miami team — is exciting for us."

Three days earlier, the Seminoles were in a much different place. In a stunning upset by visiting Wake Forest, the unranked Demon Deacons forced FSU into 23 turnovers and converted many of those miscues into easy baskets.

As frustrating as that loss was, Semrau said she was enthused by the way her players responded in practices on Friday and Saturday.

"I don't need to browbeat them," Semrau said, noting that she has five seniors and two juniors in her seven-player rotation. "They are very intelligent young women. And they want it as much as anybody wants it. So they really took it to heart and worked at the things we needed to do to be a better basketball team."

On Sunday, the Seminoles (13-3, 3-2 ACC) were every bit as good as usual on offense. They shot at least 50 percent from the field in both halves, and they had six players score at least eight points.

Senior guard Leonor Rodriguez led the way with 21 points, and junior forward Natasha Howard (20 points, nine rebounds) was not far behind. Senior forward Chasity Clayton added 14 points, and senior forward Chelsea Davis posted a double-double with 13 points and a career-high 13 rebounds. While Howard and Davis grabbed the most boards, FSU was able to win the rebounding battle with a collective effort; all nine Seminoles who played snared at least one rebound, and eight had at least two.

It was an impressive effort against the No. 24 Hurricanes (12-4, 3-2), who have two of the ACC's top rebounders in 6-foot-6 center Shawnice Wilson and forward Morgan Stroman.

"Rebounding — that was what the coaches talked to us about in practice for the past two days," Howard said. "Box out. Box out. If we didn't box out, we probably wouldn't be able to win this game."

Though they have had some struggles on defense this season, the Seminoles gave Miami fits by mixing looks on seemingly every trip down the court. FSU primarily alternated between zone and man in the half-court, but the Seminoles also threw in some traps that caught the Hurricanes off-guard.

"I'm disappointed in the score, and I think a lot of it had to do with our lack of offensive composure in the first half against their little three-quarter-court trap," UM coach Katie Meier said. "You could see the inexperience in our guards come up."

Turnovers doom No. 18 FSU

Wake Forest storms past Seminoles for 80-72 win

12:09 AM, Jan 11, 2013 |

Comments

Written by

Corey Clark

NoleSports.com editor

Sue Semrau was blunt in the assessment of her team's 80-72 loss at home to Wake Forest on Thursday night.

"We didn't deserve to win this game," the Florida State head coach said. "They did a great job, I thought, of changing up their defenses and we did a terrible job of adjusting to that. We just threw the ball into their hands way too many times."

Twenty three times, to be exact.

The Seminoles' season-high 23 turnovers led to 33 Wake Forest points on the other end as the Demon Deacons (9-6, 2-1 in the ACC) handed FSU its first home loss of the season.

Wake's Lakevia Boykin scored a career-high 34 points (12 of 21 from the floor and 6 of 6 from the line) and Dearica Hambry added 23 points – 17 of which came in the second half.

Boykin was scoring 14.5 points per game coming in to Thursday night and Hamby was at 11.1.

They both more than doubled those averages against the No. 18 Seminoles (12-3, 2-2 in the ACC).

Senior Chelsea Davis scored a career-high 25 points for Florida State and senior guard Leonor Rodriguez scored 19 points and had a team-high eight assists. But she also had a game-high six turnovers as well.

"We didn't play with any sense of urgency," Rodriguez said. "And we didn't work hard. The turnovers? I'm a big part of it. I had six of them and I cannot have that. I think we need to take care of the ball and go back to who we are."

Who the Seminoles have been halfway through the season is a team with exceptional balance, with five players averaging in double figures. On Thursday night they had just three.

Junior Natasha Howard scored 11 points and grabbed 12 rebounds, but Alexa Deluzio and Chasity Clayton combined for just 13 points on 5 of 15 shooting from the floor.

And Florida State was done in by two monster Wake Forest runs.

The first came in the first half when the Deacons held the Seminoles scoreless on 11 straight trips. Six of those possessions ended in an FSU turnover as Wake scored 10 straight points and 13 of 15 during one stretch.

And in the second half Wake went on a game-changing 16-2 run to turn a three-point deficit into an 11-point advantage with seven minutes remaining.

“That’s my fault,” Semrau said. “As a coach I need to put them in situations we’re dealing with those switching defenses. I think we work a lot on what we’re going to do against all those different defenses, but to put them in a situation where they have to read it – I don’t think I’ve done a good enough job with that.

“It’s early enough (in the season) that we can make that adjustment.”

Florida State closed to within two with 2:55 left on a Rodriguez 3, but Hamby scored on the next possession while being fouled. She missed the free-throw but Wake got the rebound, got fouled and made two from the line for a four-point trip that all but iced the game for the visitors.

The Seminoles (12-3, 2-2) play again on Sunday afternoon at home against Miami.

FSU's Rodriguez enjoying breakout senior season

After slow start to college career, Rodriguez shines bright for FSU

12:42 AM, Jan 10, 2013 |

Comments

Written by

Corey Clark

There isn't one simple explanation for what has happened to Florida State's Leonor Rodriguez.

With a turnaround like this, how could there be?

The senior shooting guard averaged 3.9 points per game through her first three years in Tallahassee. She wondered often, especially early in her career, if she was ever going to make a real impact on the FSU program. So did her head coach. And her teammates.

And yet here she is, enjoying one of the most out-of-the-blue senior seasons by anyone. In any sport. Ever.

"She's exceeded all of my expectations," said FSU coach Sue Semrau, whose team hosts Wake Forest tonight at the Civic Center. "We noticed it early on in practice. She was one of those kids that you just felt like she was doing everything right. Earning it. Earning it. Day after day. And then you put her in there and bam, all of a sudden."

The numbers are stunning.

Coming into this season, Rodriguez had scored a total of 217 points in her career. She's scored 217 already this season, including five 20-point games.

After scoring in double-figures just five times in her first three years, she's already done it 12 times as a senior and currently leads the Seminoles in scoring at 15.5 points per game.

Through half a season, Rodriguez has proven to be one of the top all-around players in the ACC, ranking in the top 10 in five different categories (scoring, free-throw percentage, steals, 3-point shooting and 3-pointers made).

Which all leads to the obvious question: What in the world is going on?

"I don't know," Rodriguez said with a smile. "I just knew I needed to work harder. And I think I just came in with a new mentality. It's my senior year. It's now or never. I just wanted to give it my all."

There are a number of angles brought up when it comes to her 180-degree turnaround.

Rodriguez got in the best shape of her life in the offseason, and credits Florida State strength and conditioning coach Dave Plett for improving her speed, footwork and quickness.

She got confidence from playing — and playing well — for her native Spain in an international three-on-three competition last summer.

She was determined to be more aggressive offensively, and has almost quadrupled her career average in shots per game.

And, as Rodriguez points out, she's also playing with two legitimate, high-level point guards in Morgan Toles and "Cheetah" Delgado, who get her the ball in great position to score.

"It's just the team we have," Rodriguez said. "It's a lot of fun. It's a fun style. And I play my game. I play happy. I don't have to worry as much."

Fifth-year senior guard Alexa Deluzio, who has been a scoring presence since her first day in an FSU uniform, was as surprised as anyone when she saw the new Rodriguez on display this season.

"I think she has shocked everybody," Deluzio said. "And it's so fun to watch. A lot of times it's unfortunate because players like that, who work hard, don't always get to see the benefits of their hard work. So it's nice to see how well Leo is playing now."

Especially for Florida State assistant coach Brooke Wyckoff, who first met Rodriguez when the former was a professional player on a Spanish club team and the latter was a 14-year-old star guard for the club's junior squad.

Rodriguez would practice against Wyckoff and her teammates occasionally.

"She was really good," the assistant coach said. "She was a star."

But for years, that star had trouble shining in the United States. Rodriguez admits the first three seasons weren't easy, especially those first two when she played just 25 games total.

"For sure, it was hard," she said. "Especially being so far from home. But I didn't want to give up. I had already proven overseas that I can play basketball, and I wanted to prove that I could play the American style, too.

"I thought about going back home, but it's not who I am. But for sure, the thought came to my mind. But I never made it happen because I still had a lot to give to this team. And I knew it. I just had to put more work in."

It's paying off now.

Rodriguez, who is averaging a team-high 31.5 minutes per game, has been a driving force behind the Seminoles' 12-2 start. With the aforementioned point guards doing such a good job with the ball-handling duties this year, Rodriguez has been able to shoot. Score. And shine.

"It's like she just blossomed," Wyckoff said. "It's the girl I've always known. She's playing now like the star I saw when she was younger. And my heart just explodes every time she does well."

"I knew I could do it," Rodriguez said. "I knew I was the right fit for this team. I like FSU. It was my first time in America, and I was going to prove that I could play."

No. 8 Maryland fends off rally to beat No. 21 FSU

7:05p.m. EST January 6, 2013

COLLEGE PARK, Md. (AP) — Florida State coach Sue Semrau was proud of her team's effort in its loss to Maryland.

The 21st-ranked Seminoles trailed by 16 at the half and rallied within three points before falling short of the No. 8 Terrapins in a 71-64 loss on Sunday that ended Florida State's five-game winning streak.

Chelsea Davis scored 18 points for the Seminoles, Alexia Delusio added 15 and Natasha Howard 11 for Florida State (12-2, 2-1 ACC). The Seminoles hadn't lost since a 78-77 defeat at Nebraska on Dec. 8.

TOP TEAM UPENDED: No. 5 Notre Dame beats No. 1 UConn

"It was great ACC road battle for us, and we learned a lot," Semrau said. "The competition in the ACC is tremendous. All of our games (in the ACC) are going to be tough. We're a team that wants to get better. I love our chemistry, and I'm excited for this team moving forward."

Alyssa Thomas had 20 points and 15 rebounds to lead Maryland (11-3, 2-1).

"Alyssa Thomas didn't disappoint today," Semrau said. "Tianna Hawkins takes a lot of pressure off Thomas, too. I thought (Maryland's) guards played well — stepped up and hit shots. It was a great fight."

Tianna Hawkins added 17 points while Tierney Pfirman had 12 points for the Terrapins (11-3, 2-1 Atlantic Coast Conference). Maryland, which dropped a 60-57 decision at No. 23 North Carolina on Thursday, has not lost two straight this season.

"I thought we showed a lot of character coming bouncing back from our loss to Carolina," Maryland coach Brenda Frese said. "Coming out and making a statement early in the first half, great energy in terms of how we defended and rebounded the basketball and shared the basketball."

Florida State chipped away at the Maryland lead throughout the second half, getting to within three points at 66-63 with just over a minute remaining. But Pfirman responded with a 3-pointer on the Terrapins' next possession to preserve the victory.

"We fell behind early and we had to keep fighting back," Semrau said. "I liked the fact that our girls continued to battle back. They never gave up. We got to within three points late."

Maryland owned a 48-30 advantage in rebounds.

"We knew they were going to make runs and they did. Florida State is a really good team," Frese said. "I am proud of the fight, we didn't quit. We fought for each other. I am really excited in term of our team play, and for Tierney Pfirman and Katie Rutan hitting big shots. It opened it up and gave us some breathing room."

Seminoles hold off charging Eagles

FSU's Deluzio registers first career double-double

6:47 PM, Dec 30, 2012 |

Comments

Written by

Jim Henry

Democrat assistant sports editor

Morgan Toles' first instinct is to pass the basketball. Such is life for most point guards.

On Sunday, however, the Florida State senior made a split-second decision to shoot, and not share. It proved to be the right choice, too, one that Seminole coach Sue Semrau applauded.

Toles' baseline jumper with 43 seconds remaining helped the No. 21 Seminoles hold off Boston College 76-70 in an entertaining Atlantic Coast Conference opener in women's basketball at the Civic Center.

"In my mind I was thinking, 'I am shooting this, I am not passing,'" said a smiling Toles, who, as timing would have it, shot extra base-line jumpers in Saturday's practice.

Senior Alexa Deluzio paced FSU (11-1 overall, 1-0 ACC) with her first career double-double with 25 points and 12 rebounds.

And it was Deluzio, dribbling to her right near the foul line, who passed the ball to an open Toles on the baseline with the shot clock winding down.

Toles' 12-foot shot rolled around the rim and fell through, giving the Seminoles welcomed breathing room and their seventh home win this season.

A relieved and appreciative crowd of 2,722 watched the Eagles (6-5, 0-1), relying on six treys in the second half and 13 overall, furiously rally from a double-digit deficit to pull within 72-70 with 1:52 remaining.

Following a FSU turnover, Boston College had a chance to tie the game or go ahead for the first time. With Tolles defending, however, Eagles guard Tessah Holt missed a difficult, driving layup to her left.

Toles followed with her jumper to help save the day. She finished with a season-high nine points and the Seminoles extended their win streak to four heading into their next game at ACC rival Georgia Tech on Thursday.

"It's good momentum to get this win," Toles said. "It might not have been the prettiest thing but we can definitely take some positives from it."

FSU survived despite suffering 17 turnovers and looking a step slow on defense at times.

Boston College guards Kerri Shields and Nicole Boudreau, the ACC's top two leaders in three-pointers made, made a combined 9 of 17 treys.

The Eagles trailed by as many as 14 points (27-13) in the first half and 12 (59-47) in the second half at the 8:49 mark in the game.

“It was one of those games where nothing we did defensively could absolutely shut them down,” Eagles coach Erik Johnson said. “We could never quite get over the edge, but you know what? They couldn’t either.”

The Seminoles’ relied on their height advantage and controlled the boards 40-32. Forward Natasha Howard also had a double-double with 12 points and 10 rebounds, while Leonor Rodriguez added 14 points.

Deluzio, of course, was sensational. She made 9 of 14 field goals, 7 of 8 free throws and also finished with six assists – her last one to an open Toles on the baseline.

“Her confidence jump-started everything we did today,” Semrau said of Deluzio.

“We needed her to be a rebounder as we didn’t do a very good job in that category. I felt like we were a little rusty. I’m proud of the way the team gritted the game out towards the end when Boston College made their run.

“It was a good win for us.”

FSU's Toles relishes second shot

11:37 PM, Oct 30, 2012 |

Written by

Corey Clark

NoleSports.com editor

It is a moment so fresh in her mind, so life-changing, that when she talks about it almost 11 months later she still gets emotional.

Morgan Toles thought her basketball career was over. She had been told by the Auburn team doctors she would never be cleared to play for the school after suffering a concussion during her sophomore season. When she looked for other programs to finish her career with, many backed off because of the medical reports they received from Auburn.

Florida State did not. Head coach Sue Semrau invited the Georgia native to Tallahassee in December of last year and the FSU doctors did their own tests on Toles, a talented point guard who had been one of the best in the SEC her first two years.

A few days later, sitting at her kitchen table with her parents and brother, Toles got a phone call from Semrau.

“The doctors said everything looked good,” Semrau told her. “We want you here.”

Toles dropped the phone in disbelief.

“I remember immediately crying,” Toles said. “I hugged my mom. She was crying. My brother was there and he was high-fiving me. It was a really emotional day.”

One she wasn't sure she would ever have. After Auburn wouldn't clear her to play in March of 2011, Toles' father, Alvin (a former NFL linebacker), decided to get a second opinion. And a third. And a fourth.

The subsequent neurologists that examined Toles said she was fine to return to basketball. Still. It didn't seem to matter. Not until FSU's own doctors examined her and agreed she was fit to play.

“Auburn felt like she hadn't recovered properly after her last concussion,” Semrau said. “So they would not clear her and deemed her medically disqualified. And so when her family realized how badly she still wanted to play they went and took her to (get more opinions). Because they didn't want to put her in harm's way either.

“So when those doctors cleared her that's when they said let's go find a team. And once we find a team if the doctors there will clear you then you'll play.”

A few weeks after the phone call from Semrau, Toles -- who was still on scholarship at Auburn despite not being able to play -- was moving to Tallahassee to join the FSU program. She said it was tough to leave her former team behind, but it would have been tougher to give up the sport she fell in love with as a 4-year-old.

“Basketball has always been a part of my life,” said Toles, who led the SEC in assists as a sophomore. “I love Auburn to death. It’s a great family atmosphere ... but I couldn’t see myself not playing on other people’s terms.”

Yet even though Toles officially became a member of the FSU team in January, she was not able to play for the Seminoles right away.

After a seemingly interminable wait, the NCAA finally ruled Toles eligible with 11 games left in the 2011-2012 season. Semrau went to her new guard and asked if she wanted to forego a redshirt year and start playing for the Seminoles - instead of just practicing.

For Toles it wasn’t a difficult decision at all.

“Initially when I came in I said I’m just going to sit out and get two full years of basketball,” Toles said. “It’s easy to say that though when you’re not in it. Because when I was here practicing I was like, you know what? I’m ready to go.”

Unfortunately for Toles and her new coach, she was injured in her fourth game in garnet and gold, down in Miami, when she tore ligaments in her elbow.

Just like that, her season was over. And even though she played in just four games, because they were in the second half of the year, per NCAA rules Toles was ineligible for a medical redshirt.

So here she is. With one season left in her college career.

“She’s relishing every minute, which is great” Semrau said. “She’s so much more comfortable.”

Said Toles: “Almost every day I think about the time where I didn’t have any of this, this wasn’t possible. So I’m just trying to take everything in. This is my last year of college basketball and I just want to take full advantage of it.”

Especially considering where she was eleven months ago. Before the phone call. Sitting at a kitchen table with her parents. Not knowing if she’d ever play the sport again.

“I probably won’t ever forget that,” Toles said. “At all. And when things get tough sometimes I just think back to that day.”

She smiles. Her eyes begin to glisten ever so slightly.

She pauses for a moment before adding: “It was just a great day.”

Seminole open ACC play vs. Boston College

Written by Jim Henry Democrat assistant sports editor
Dec. 29

tallahassee.com



Florida State's Alexa Deluzio looks to pass the ball inside against Grambling State.

Boston College vs. FSU

- When/Where: Sunday, 2 p.m. (Civic Center)
- TV/Radio: ESPN3/100.7 FM
- Noteworthy: Fans can buy one ticket and get a second one for free to today's game as part of a holiday promotion from the FSU Athletic Department... Sophomore Morgan Jones will sign autographs after the game.

The Florida State women's basketball team has made banner headlines this season because of its prolific offense.

The No. 21 Seminoles have eclipsed the 90-point barrier five times and leads the Atlantic Coast Conference in scoring (84.3 points per game) and field-goal percentage (49 percent).

They are the only Division I team in the country that has five players averaging double figures.

Yet, defense and rebounding could determine FSU's success in the ACC.

The Seminoles, 10-1 for just the sixth time in school history, open conference play Sunday against Boston College (6-4) at the Civic Center. Tip-off is 2 p.m.

While the Eagles rank last in the ACC in rebounding and blocks, they lead the ACC in three-pointers made per game (7.0) and free-throw percentage (76 percent).

"I still feel like we need to grow by leaps and bounds in order to do what can do," FSU coach Sue Semrau said of her team's focus on defense and rebounding.

"But we are getting there. I think their (defensive) mindset is more than it has ever been. Defense is what fuels our offense."

FSU has been steady this season in both defense and rebounding, combining impressive athleticism with sound discipline to help set the tone of games.

The Seminoles forced 34 turnovers and had 25 steals in their 93-63 win at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro prior to Christmas on Dec. 22. They also rank third in the ACC in rebound margin (plus 9.8) and eighth in scoring defense (57.2).

Semrau believes her team can continue to build on its early-season momentum. The Seminoles enjoyed a four-day holiday break before it returned to practice on Thursday.

Following today's game, FSU plays four league games over an 11-day span starting Jan. 3 at Georgia Tech.

"They are a veteran group -- they know what's coming up and know how to take care of their bodies," Semrau said. "I liked their mindset."

FSU senior guard Alexa Deluzio is averaging 19.8 points per game over the last four games and has scored double

<http://nolesports.tallahassee.com/article/20121229/FSU02/312290031/Seminoles-open-ACC-play-vs-Boston-College>
figures in seven straight games.

Deluzio had a career-best 28 points, making 6-of-9 three-pointers, in last season's win at Boston College.

Business as usual for FSU women's hoops

Written by Jim Henry Democrat assistant sports editor
Dec. 19

tallahassee.com

The outcome was never in question. The talent gap between the two teams was rather obvious, too.

Yet, the Florida State women's basketball team focused on playing at a high level, combining poise with precision and purpose to dismantle the Mercer Bears 94-42 on Wednesday night.

A Civic Center crowd of 2,303 watched the No. 23 Seminoles (9-1) take another impressive step forward, knowing full well their journey will only get more difficult in a hurry with the start of Atlantic Coast Conference play in less than two weeks.

FSU, at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro on Saturday, opens ACC play at home against Boston College on Dec. 30.

"They are really starting to play together and having fun doing it," said FSU coach Sue Semrau, whose team outscored its past two opponents (Grambling State and Mercer) by 88 points.

"They accept the challenges we throw at them, and they probably think we're crazy that we kept saying ... we don't want to settle, we don't want to be content."

FSU certainly wasn't content against the Bears (6-4).

The Seminoles outscored the Atlantic Sun Conference member 62-18 inside the paint, grabbed a season-high 59 rebounds and shot 51.3 percent (39 of 76), 61 percent in the second half. They also had a season-low 12 turnovers.

Natasha Howard had a double-double by the half, finishing with 17 points and 12 rebounds. Chelsea Davis added 17 points and Alex Deluzio 15 as five players scored in double digits, the norm for this team. FSU is the only team in the country with five players averaging in double figures.

But that's only part of the story. The Seminoles played hard from start to finish, and had fun in the process.

"That's what is so fun about this team that no one is out there worrying about their points, their performance," Deluzio said. "We are worried about a win and whatever that looks like, everybody is happy with it. It makes playing really enjoyable."

Mercer missed its first 10 shots and fell behind by double digits mere minutes into the game. The Bears, who dropped previous road games at No. 5 Notre Dame (93-36) and at No. 6 Georgia (80-38), shot just 23.2 percent (19 of 82). That included 1 of 17 beyond the arc.

Despite finishing with 46 rebounds in a game that saw the teams combine for 158 shots, Mercer simply couldn't keep pace.

And that was just fine with Semrau, whose team also held advantages in second-chance points (27-18), fastbreak points (22-4) and bench scoring (35-17).

"I thought we got better as we went, and that's really important. Some games you can come in and coast through, and we did not do that," Semrau said. "I expect it. I have great kids, I have great players, and I expect it. For me it's relief, it isn't gratifying. It's just like, 'Oh, we did what we are suppose to do. Now (what's) next.' We have certain goals we want to attain, and they want to get better."



Hooper's career day leads No. 25 NU over No. 24 Florida State

By Sam McKewon World-Herald News Service | Posted: Sunday, December 9, 2012 12:14 am

LINCOLN — Jordan Hooper tried to flush it, erase it, maybe even tell the thing to get behind her.

But prolific scorers like the junior forward don't easily forget a goose egg against a rival. So when Hooper was held scoreless in Nebraska's 66-57 loss to Creighton, she was "a little bit mad" going into Saturday's tilt against No. 24 Florida State. As mad as a queen of sheepish shrugs could be, anyway.

Hooper started her pregame shootaround hot. And she didn't cool off until she'd scored a career-high 36 points in a white-knuckle, 78-77 win over the Seminoles. She swept behind screens for 3-pointers, ran the floor for layups and muscled for putbacks. She hit six 3-pointers and grabbed 12 rebounds.

"When I walked in the gym, it was a different day, different feel," Hooper said.

"She hit a step-back 3 on a guard and I was like, 45>Oh, Hoop's back," senior guard Lindsey Moore said.

"She got busy," FSU coach Sue Semrau said.

So did offensive-minded FSU in this fast-paced game with 17 lead changes.

The Seminoles shot 53.6 percent, hit 70 percent of their 3-pointers and repeatedly gashed No. 25 Nebraska's perimeter defense. Guards Leonor Rodriguez (24 points) and Alexis Deluzio (19) seemingly had an answer for every Husker run. The duo scored seven straight points to turn a 71-66 deficit into a 73-71 FSU lead with 2:29 remaining.

Hooper answered with an offensive rebound and a layup, and she set crucial screens on NU's final two possessions, both of which ended with two points.

FSU (7-1) had a chance to win with 1.3 seconds left after officials whistled Husker forward Emily Cady for her fifth foul while Seminole forward Natasha Howard was attempting a putback shot.

"I was so sad," said Cady, who had 15 points.

During the five minutes referees took to figure out who fouled Howard and how much time remained on the clock — coach Connie Yori had several animated chats with them — the 3,864 fans at the

Devaney Center booed and screamed.

“I’m not sure I’ve heard the Devaney Center any louder than that when the kid was shooting the free throws,” Yori said.

Said Hooper: “Our crowd got in her head a little bit.”

A 69-percent free-throw shooter, Howard clanged the first one off the rim. She airballed the second by several inches. Nebraska (7-3) ran out the rest of the clock. The normally reserved Hooper pumped her first at midcourt, delivered hard high-fives to her teammates and left the floor waving to the crowd. Though Florida State threw some “junk defenses” at Hooper, Yori said, she moved better without the ball and fought for more position.

“Jordan sometimes guards herself,” Yori said. “Today she didn’t guard herself. She moved and she found opportunities in different ways. Wednesday night, Creighton did a good job on her, but she guarded herself. She didn’t want to move. She didn’t want to post. So it was good tonight to see her get going.”

NOTES: Nebraska takes off eight days for finals week before playing at South Florida on Dec. 16. ... NU has won its last 12 games against teams from Florida, including two over Florida State in the last two years. ... The Huskers won the rebounding battle 38-31 with 15 offensive boards.



Husker women's basketball holds off Florida State Seminoles to win 78-77

Chris Heady | Posted: Monday, December 10, 2012 12:15 am

In an exciting finish at the Bob Devaney Sports Center Saturday afternoon, the Nebraska women's basketball team upset the unbeaten No. 24 Florida State Seminoles 78-77, and improved to 7-3 on the season. The Huskers were led by All-American Jordan Hooper, who erupted for a career-high 36 points and added 12 rebounds coming off a scoreless game against Creighton on Wednesday.

"I knew I was on during shoot-around today," Hooper said in the postgame press conference. "I was just glad to come out and hit some shots. This was a big win for our team against a great Florida State team."

The matchup came down to the final seconds when Nebraska's Emily Cady was called for a foul seemingly at the buzzer. The referees determined the foul occurred with .4 seconds on the clock, and Florida State's Natasha Howard would be sent to the line for two shots. Down by a point, Howard, a 66-percent free throw shooter, clanked the first off the back of the rim, and failed to hit anything on her second attempt, air balling Florida State's chance at a win. Nebraska would inbound the ball, and the clock would expire again, but this time, with a 78-77 score in favor of Nebraska set in stone.

"I was praying during those free throws," Hooper said.

The game might as well have been "The Hooper Show." She put on runs all by herself, including an 8-0 run to bring the Huskers out of a 23-30 deficit in the first half to take a 31-30 lead. Nebraska would lead 40-36 at halftime. Hooper accounted for 22 of those 40 points.

"Honestly I put (the Creighton game) out of my mind. It wasn't pretty for our whole team, we just didn't play very well," Hooper said. "I tried not to let that get me down for this game, I tried to look past that game and just move on to the next one."

The second half was packed with lead changes, and eventually came down to a 59-59 tie with 11 minutes left. Neither team would gain more than a two-point lead for the rest of the contest.

"It was a fun, fun game to play in," Nebraska guard Lindsey Moore said, who had one of her best all-around games of the season with 14 points and 8 assists.

With 26 seconds left and the Huskers down by one, Moore dribbled left off of a high-ball screen from

Hooper and hit a 10-foot leaner, putting her team up one, and would eventually be the game-winning bucket after Howard's missed free throws. The team, and Husker coach Connie Yori, pointed to the crowd for keeping them in the game.

"Our crowd was unbelievable throughout the game, but I'm not sure I've ever heard the Devaney Center louder than it was at the end," Yori said. "Our crowd was huge today. They gave us energy throughout the game, and they were definitely there for us at the end."

Florida State's electric offense was unable to be stopped by Nebraska. As a team, the Seminoles shot 53 percent from the field, and an astonishing 77 percent from 3-point range. Their best shooter, Leonor Rodriguez, who shoots 62 percent from behind the arc on the year, led the team with 24 points on 7-for-13 shooting, including 3-for-4 from 3-point territory.

Going into Finals Week, Nebraska will finally have a week to rest and practice. Yori is looking forward to finally working on improvement.

"We have to work on everything," Yori said. "Especially our defense. Our defense is not where it needs to be."

The Huskers will take their 7-3 record on the road to South Florida on Dec. 16, and they will try and keep their undefeated record against Florida teams this season alive.



ESPN.com: Women's College Basketball

[[Print without images](#)]

Sunday, November 25, 2012

Updated: November 26, 1:59 PM ET

FSU is better than expected

By Graham Hays
espnW

It was a heck of a holiday weekend for Florida State.

Even if it would have been better if they played only three quarters in football.

The small matter of a gridiron collapse against in-state rival



Leonor Rodriguez and Florida State (5-0) upset No. 17 Vanderbilt 73-59 on Saturday.

Florida notwithstanding, Florida State women's teams more than held up their end of the bargain. Ranked No. 1 for much of the season, the women's soccer team advanced to the College Cup with a quarterfinal win against Notre Dame. For just the third time, the women's volleyball team earned a seed in the NCAA tournament after it beat Miami on Friday to win the ACC championship.

And while there's a lot of basketball to be played before the women's basketball team need worry about postseason play, Saturday's 73-59 victory against No. 17 Vanderbilt is further evidence of a comeback season on the court.

The win against the admittedly struggling Commodores came a day after a 90-51 win against Eastern Kentucky in the San Juan Shootout in Puerto Rico and moved Florida State to 5-0 on the season (including a 31-point win against the Gators, just in case anyone in Tallahassee needed a lift on that count). That represents a marked improvement over last season, when the Seminoles didn't pick up their fifth win until Dec. 10 on their way to a 14-17 record and a postseason spent at home, the first losing season for coach Sue Semrau since 2001-02 and just the second time in that span her team didn't win at least 20 games.

So why might this start be more than a mirage?

Through five games, Florida State has 94 assists and 94 turnovers. Last season, the Seminoles finished with 230 more turnovers than assists, a difficult deficit to overcome for a team that also forced far fewer turnovers than it committed and struggled to create second-chance points. Teams can win at a high level with a high-risk, high-reward style (see: Wildcats, Kentucky), but they have to make up the lost possessions somewhere along the line.

The keys to turning things around have been a full season with Auburn transfer Morgan Toles, who appeared in just four games last season, and the arrival of junior college transfer Yashira Delgado. Averaging better than 51 combined minutes per game, Toles and Delgado have taken just 36 shots this season but have been credited with 64 assists. Toles had 10 assists without a turnover in the win against Eastern Washington, and Delgado, who goes by her nickname "Cheetah" rather than Yashira, had nine assists and four steals against Vanderbilt, playing all weekend in front of friends and family as a second-generation Puerto Rican.

But it wasn't either distributor whom Semrau named as the MVP through five games. That label instead went to senior Leonor Rodriguez.

Rodriguez arrived from Spain as a freshman with some dazzling YouTube highlights and an impressive international résumé at the youth level, but she had a quiet first two seasons for the Seminoles and contributed sparingly off the bench. Although lost amidst the wreckage of the season, she took on a much more significant role as a junior, starting 26 games and proving herself a reliable 3-point option. That still didn't really hint at what she has done so far this season, averaging 16 points per game on 65 percent shooting, including 61 percent 3-point shooting. Even when those percentages return to merely mortal levels, another scoring option would make everyone else incrementally more difficult to stop, from Natasha Howard inside to Alexa Deluzio outside.

Maybe it's wise to withhold judgment on the Seminoles for a few more games, beginning with Wednesday's home game against Iowa ([ESPN3](#), 7 p.m. ET), before penciling them in with Duke and Maryland as ACC contenders. But it does seem like we've seen enough to know this is more than the seventh-place team it was predicted to be in the ACC preseason poll. Perhaps much more.

Team of the weekend



Syracuse: The 6-0 record just doesn't look right for Syracuse. Not the unbeaten part; the Orange have gotten off to strong starts in recent seasons. It's the part that puts five of their six wins away from home. The team that often padded its record by welcoming every overmatched team in the state short of SUNY-New Paltz to town is venturing out into the world. Granted, early trips to Maine and Cornell were more challenging bus rides than games, but the past week was the real deal -- maybe not by the standards of Connecticut or Notre Dame, but certainly by those of the rest of the pack.

In seasons past, Tuesday's 80-39 road win at Saint Joseph's, the same team that knocked off Maryland a week



Junior guard Yashira Delgado is averaging 6.6 assists through five games.

earlier, might have been the signature game away from home for the Orange. This season it was just a warm-up for weekend games against Georgia Tech and Virginia in Puerto Rico. Syracuse won both by a combined four points, a three-point win in overtime against the Yellow Jackets and a one-point win in regulation against the Cavaliers. The Orange shot below 40 percent in both games. They could have lost one or both. That they didn't is a good sign, but it wouldn't have mattered if they did. Just playing those games now should help this team in Big East play later.

She also starred



Brandi Brown, Youngstown State: The Penguins are unbeaten with Thanksgiving in the rearview mirror. Maybe that won't make those of you who don't spend an inordinate amount of time watching Horizon League basketball spit out whatever beverage you're consuming while reading it, but trust me, it should. Youngstown State went 10-20 last season -- and that was cause for celebration. This is, after all, a team that played 30 games during the 2009-10 season and didn't win any of them.

But after a decisive 76-56 road win Sunday against a Miami (Ohio) team that could well win the MAC, Youngstown State is unbeaten in four starts (including a road victory at Pittsburgh). Give a lot of credit to third-year coach Bob Boldon, who took over in the Titanic-like wake of that 0-30 season. Give just as much to Brandi Brown, an undersized 5-foot-11 senior forward who has been one of the conference's best players for several seasons. Brown put up 18 points, 12 rebounds and three assists against the Redhawks (we'll forgive her the eight turnovers) and is averaging 21 points and 14.3 rebounds so far this season.

Quarterbacking Nebraska

Of all the preseason predictions, rankings and lists we're asked to make (and, at least in my case, generally miss), none was more difficult than narrowing

are considerably more than five truly elite college point guards. Still, I didn't feel good at the time about leaving Nebraska's Lindsey Moore off my list, and it feels even more dubious right about now.

Through six games, Moore is averaging 15.3 points, 4.9 assists and 4.0 rebounds per game. She's shooting 42 percent from the 3-point line and has turned over the ball just nine times in 169 minutes. And she lived up to all of those numbers in Nebraska's biggest victory to this point in the season, a 74-65 win at Southern California on Friday. Moore scored 23 points, hitting 13 of 15 free throws and scoring the team's final eight points, and finished with seven rebounds, four assists and no turnovers in 34 minutes against the Women of Troy. Nebraska lost its first road game of the season at South Dakota State (not before Moore scored 21 points in a tough environment), so the win in Los Angeles was all the more meaningful of a building block as the Huskers



Lindsey Moore's 23 points helped Nebraska beat Southern California in L.A. on Friday.

prepare for their biggest game of the nonconference season at home against Maryland on Wednesday.

Welcome back

Providence first-year coach Susan Robinson Fruchtl might be the lone dissenter (and in reality, even the former Wade Trophy winner at Penn State surely appreciated it), but the best sight of the holiday week on the basketball court had to be Delaware All-American Elena Delle Donne making her season debut. Delle Donne played 27 minutes against Providence but used the time wisely in finishing with 22 points and eight rebounds in a 64-46 victory.

Delaware plays just three more times between now and a Dec. 20 showdown at home against Maryland, so the timing works to Delle Donne's benefit in not overexerting herself. She returned to the court wearing tights underneath her game shorts, as she did when she returned from battling Lyme disease during the 2010-11 season and something she described as one small part of managing the condition on a day-to-day basis, in this case to keep her warm.

Before next weekend

Louisville at UT-Martin (Monday): It's a rough start for the preseason mid-major No. 10, but losses at Northwestern and at Hawaii aren't embarrassing, and losses against Stanford and Baylor shouldn't be discouraging. Now UT-Martin gets a home game. Through a small sample size of six contests, Louisville's Shoni Schimmel (47 percent shooting, 39 percent 3-point shooting, 30 assists, 19 turnovers) has been more efficient than in seasons past.

Duke at Michigan (Wednesday): It's a rare true road game for the Blue Devils, who played at Xavier on Sunday but play just three non-neutral-site games away from Cameron Indoor before Jan. 3. Probability says it can't last, but Michigan's top three 3-point shooters and three leading scorers -- Rachel Sheffer, Kate Thompson and Jenny Ryan -- are shooting a combined 52 percent from behind the arc.

Georgia Tech at Purdue (Wednesday): Georgia Tech coach MaChelle Joseph returns to her alma mater and could use a win after her team dropped an overtime decision against Syracuse in Puerto Rico and now faces Purdue, Georgia and Duke in quick succession. Purdue was overmatched against Connecticut in the U.S. Virgin Islands, but guards Courtney Moses and KK Houser are shooting 48 percent from the 3-point line through six games.

Ohio State at North Carolina (ESPN3, 7 ET Wednesday): Ohio State's eye-catching defense silenced a good player in Wright State's Kim Demmings on Sunday (Demmings scored 17 points but needed 23 shots and turned over the ball seven times), but a trip to Chapel Hill is a different test. The Buckeyes are struggling to control the boards at the moment, and the Tar Heels are in the black in rebounding margin by more than 10 per game so far this season.

Drexel at South Carolina (Wednesday): First one to 45 wins in a matchup of good defenses. This is the biggest hurdle between South Carolina and a 10-0 record when Stanford comes to town. The Gamecocks beat two good mid-major programs in Hampton and Florida Gulf Coast in the U.S. Virgin Islands and capped their stay with a 55-46 win against DePaul. They have an otherworldly plus-20.6 rebound margin but are leaving too many points on the free throw line.

Hofstra at Marist (Wednesday): Don't discount this game because of six combined losses. Both the Pride and the Red Foxes have taken some lumps against quality early schedules, making a win in one of several mid-major showdowns this week all the more valuable. With too many turnovers and only 33 assists through five games, Hofstra appears to really miss point guard Candice Bellocchio.

Middle Tennessee at Tennessee (Wednesday): All eyes, or at least most eyes, will be on Tennessee's upcoming visit from North Carolina, but this might be a better game. The Blue Raiders, who somehow already played a conference game, are forcing more than 25 turnovers per game thus far and have the athletes to pressure the Lady Vols. Then again, 21 turnovers by Tennessee didn't help them avoid a rout last year, in part because of 53 Tennessee rebounds.

Rutgers at Princeton (Thursday): These neighbors didn't meet last season, but Rutgers escaped with a 54-53 win against Princeton two seasons ago. Two starters from each team remain from that game. In the present, the Tigers let an early double-digit lead against UCLA slip away Sunday, while Rutgers rallied from a double-digit deficit to down Davidson. Princeton committed 25 turnovers against the Bruins, too many of the decidedly unforced variety.

California at Old Dominion (Friday): Cal rolled through five consecutive home games to open the season, including a 72-56 victory against Georgetown on Saturday, but it won't play its next home game until Dec. 21 (and will play just three home games between now and Jan. 17). The big test is a game at Duke on Dec. 2, but Old Dominion's 4-0 start suggests the Bears can't look past this game. Can the Monarchs, who have allowed just 30 percent shooting thus far, keep Cal point guard Brittany Boyd from setting up teammates? Boyd had 14 assists against Georgetown.



CLASSIFIEDS: JOBS CARS HOMES APARTMENTS DATING

HI, MARYJANE

E-NEWSPAPER

Football

Men's Basketball

Women's Basketball

Baseball

More Sports

Photos



Find what you are looking for ...

SEARCH

ADVERTISEMENT

Strong 2nd half ignites Seminoles

Rodriguez scores 28 to lead Florida State charge

12:35 AM, Nov 29, 2012 | Comments



A A



Purchase Image

FSU's Leo Rodriguez drives past Iowa's Morgan Johnson (12) Wednesday at the Civic Center. / Mike Ewen/Democrat

Written by **Jim Henry**
Democrat assistant sports editor

FILED UNDER

FSU
FSU Womens Basketball

Iowa felt it was in good position at halftime against Florida State on Wednesday.

The Hawkeyes trailed 33-30 against an undefeated Seminoles team that boasted a scoring margin of 30.2 points over its first five opponents.

They set the game's tempo with strong interior defense, forcing FSU to work extremely hard for open looks.

The second half was, well, a much different story. One that could bode well for the Seminoles as the season progresses.

FSU rode a career-performance from guard Leonor Rodriguez and buried Iowa 83-69 in an ACC/Big Ten Challenge showdown before a Civic Center crowd of 2,389.

Rodriguez, the reigning ACC Player of the Week, scored 28 points on an 11 of 15 performance from the floor.

The Seminoles (6-0) also exploded for 50 second-half points to make a difficult test look relatively easy, further revealing an inner fortitude the team lacked last season.

"Their second half was very, very good," Iowa coach Lisa Bluder said of the Seminoles.

"I thought our defense just went to sleep at halftime. I think when they came out in the second half, I think it was a different level of intensity and it kind of shocked us a little bit."

ADVERTISEMENT

Most Popular

Most Commented

More Headlines

- 1 [FAMU baseball coach Brown placed on leave](#)
- 2 [Apparent suicide reported on FSU campus](#)
- 3 [FSU's defense will be tested by Tech's option](#)
- 4 [Rep. Connie Mack pushes a bill benefiting donor](#)
- 5 [2 winning tickets in record Powerball jackpot](#)

Most Viewed

FSU's up-tempo style fed off a strong defensive performance that forced Iowa (5-3) into 24 turnovers and out of its comfort level. And, after making 42 of 50 free throws in a victory over West Virginia on Sunday, Iowa attempted only nine free throws against the Seminoles.

FSU, meanwhile, continues to impress with its team play. The Seminoles' bench outscored the Hawkeyes 23-3 and FSU also scored 28 points off Iowa's miscues.

"We hadn't had a game that was that tight for that long a stretch, and I thought it really showed a lot of our character," FSU coach Sue Semrau said.

And it was Rodriguez who led that charge. Her 11 field goals, including four treys, in 39 minutes were all career bests. She scored 17 points in the second half and helped break open a tight game that was tied at 42-42 with just under 14 minutes remaining.

"I am just happy for the team, happy for the victory," said Rodriguez, who also leads the ACC in shooting percentage.

"I couldn't have done it without them (teammates). I think everybody played their role. I am happy for the win and I hope we keep working hard."

The Seminoles, who play their next two games on the road at Charlotte and Nebraska, promise that won't be a problem.

Alexa Deluzio added 14 points and five boards off the bench for an FSU team that has started 6-0 for the third time in four years.

Forward Natasha Howard scored 12 points and Chelsea Davis had 10 despite foul trouble. Point guards Morgan Toles and Yashir Delgado combined for 11 points and 10 assists.

FSU shot 56.3 percent (18 of 32) in the second half after being held to 41 percent in the opening 20 minutes.

"I thought offensively we were just attacking," Deluzio said. "Players were diving for loose balls, using their energy to track down balls to get a better shot."

PHOTO GALLERIES



Felony arrest Nov. 28



Michelle Obama at FSU

Master Script Writing

Create Compelling Stories and Bring them to Screen for Film and Games. www.FullSail.edu

AdChoices

ADVERTISEMENT

View Comments | Share your thoughts »

TOP VIDEO PICKS
selected by Taboola



(3 people unfriended you)

Click Here
It's Free!

French Students Ditch
Exercise Books for Tab...
Nov 29, 2012

FSU women host Iowa

11:05 PM, Nov 27, 2012 |

Written by
Corey Clark
NoleSports.com editor

It has been a perfect start to the season for the Florida State women's basketball team.

Especially considering how the last one ended.

With the Seminoles at 5-0 on the year – which includes a 31-point beatdown of the Florida Gators and a 14-point win over a Top 20 Vanderbilt team – Sue Semrau's team has rebounded quite nicely thank you very much.

"I'm actually surprised at how quickly they've been able to turn that psyche," said Semrau, whose team was 14-17 a season ago. "A lot of work in the offseason and the preseason went into that. And I think you have to credit the players to be willing to make that shift.

"It was a big shift to make."

It's not just that the Seminoles, who host Iowa tonight as part of the ACC/Big 10 Challenge, are winning games either. It's how they're winning. It's how they're playing.

Last year FSU didn't have a true point guard for almost the entire year. Now they have two in Morgan Toles and Yashira "Cheetah" Delgado.

In the Seminoles' first game at the San Juan Shootout in Puerto Rico, Toles had 10 assists and zero turnovers. In their second game Delgado had nine assists and four steals.

"I love the selflessness we're playing with right now," Semrau said. "That comes when you have two point guards who can distribute the ball and put you in perfect position to score."

And players like Leonor Rodriguez, who was named ACC Player of the Week on Monday, are the prime benefactors. The senior is currently shooting 61.1 percent from 3-point range on the season and averaged 19 points per game in Puerto Rico.

"It's so much fun to just score fast," Rodriguez said. "We get one. And another one. And another one. It's kind of addictive. I think we all love to run and make passes."

She also said that style of play becomes contagious. And everyone on the team is now looking to find the open player, to make that extra pass. Which has helped lead to five straight double-digit victories.

And five players are averaging at least 12.2 points per game, led by Rodriguez and junior Natasha Howard at 16.0. Toles and Delgado are both averaging over six assists per game as well.

"If you play dominoes, if you push one piece all the pieces go down," Rodriguez said. "It's like that. They've started the movement and we all just want to run with them."

Women's basketball season opens with win over Samford

Seminoles take Bulldogs 77-42

7:51 AM, Nov. 13, 2012 | Comments

A A

ADVERTISEMENT



Chasity Clayton led all Seminoles in both scoring and rebounding in their season opener, racking up 20 points and 18 boards on the way to a 77-42 FSU victory against Samford. / Photo courtesy of FSU Sports Information

Written by **Brendan Bures**
Sports Editor
@BrenBures

FILED UNDER

FSU News
FSU News Basketball

The Florida State women's basketball team... victory over Samford University.

The Seminoles were led by senior Chasity Clayton, who recorded an impressive 20-point, 18-rebound double-double, the most rebounds FSU has had in a game since Jacinto Moore grabbed 21 against UAB in the 2006-07 season-opener. At the halfway point, Clayton had 12 rebounds, single-handedly matching Samford's rebound total for the first half.

"Everything was working," Clayton said. "I really wasn't worried about any [stats]. All I could think about was what was going on at the time, play-by-play. When we turned the ball over, I think I was more upset running down the floor trying to stop them in transition. I was worried about executing."

Florida State didn't play a flawless game, turning the ball over 20 times over the course of the game. The Seminoles started the game with a fast pace led by point guards Morgan Toles and Cheetah Delgado.

While the quick pace led to 11 steals and 26 points on second chance opportunities for the 'Noles, it's obvious they still need to familiarize with playing at such speed.

"That was a really good test for us early," head coach Sue Semrau said. "Samford is a team that shoots the three extremely well. They can back cut you. They can do some things that a young defense early

MORE HEADLINES

- FSU Basketball wins 'Coaches vs. Cancer' tournament
- FSU women's basketball trounces UF
- FSU basketball heads to Brooklyn tourney

ADVERTISEMENT

MORE IN FSU NEWS

in the year can have trouble with. I thought even being able to play in our zone, we did a good job of covering the middle and covering the shooters on the outside.”

Led by Clayton's team-high 20 points, Florida State's Chelsea Davis (16), Alexa Deluzio (12) and Leonor Rodriguez (10) and Natasha Howard (33) also hit the double-digit scoring mark for the 'Noles.

“We had a lot of good things, good balanced scoring, and I love having two point guards,” Semrau said.

Florida State will face off against in-state rival Florida at 7 p.m. on Thursday at the Donald L. Tucker Center. Anybody under the age of 18 will be admitted free and the game can be seen live on ESPN3 to those who can't make it to the match.

View Comments | Share your thoughts »

YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN

[New athletic dorm set to open by August 2013](#) (FSUNews.com)

[Luxurious collegiate living in Tallahassee](#) (FSUNews.com)

[Facebook intrudes on relationships](#) (FSUNews.com)

[Florida State student dissatisfied with former president's speech](#) (FSUNews.com)

[College Town coming to Tallahassee](#) (FSUNews.com)

[Alcohol-related charges at FSU increase](#) (FSUNews.com)

SPONSORED LINKS

[2012 American Music Awards: Best & Worst From the Show, Plus Full Winner's List](#) (E Online)

[50 Top College Football Quarterbacks Who Didn't Pan out as Pros](#) (BleacherReport)

[U2 - Achtung Baby: Classic Album Under Review](#) (Crackle)

[Hood State: Don't Talk Politics, Religion Or Biggie Vs. 2pac](#) (Guy Code Blog)

[10 of the richest NFL players](#) (Bankrate)

[Before Hip-Hop, There Were Hippies. Take The '60S Music Quiz!](#) (dsc.discovery.com)

[?]

ADVERTISEMENT

[Site Map](#) | [Back to Top](#)

NEWS

[Campus News](#)
[SGA](#)
[Westcott](#)

SPORTS

[Football](#)
[Basketball](#)
[Baseball](#)

ARTS AND LIFE

[Life](#)
[Local](#)
[Music](#)

VIEWS

[Blogs](#)
[Letters to the Editor](#)
[Adrian Chamberlin](#)

MORE INFO

[About the FSView](#)
[Contact Us](#)

FOLLOW US

[Twitter](#)
[Facebook](#)

Pieces are in place to get Florida State Seminoles women back on track

By Patrik Nohe
Miami Herald Writer



Gail Burton / AP

Florida State coach Sue Semrau reacts in the second half of an NCAA college basketball game against Maryland, Sunday, Feb. 28, 2010, in College Park, Md. Florida State won 94-61.

Last year, the Florida State women's basketball team took a step back. For the first time in eight seasons, the Seminoles missed the NCAA tournament. For the first time in a decade, the team had a losing record.

FSU was knocked from last year's ACC tournament in the first round by NC State.

"I think it refocuses things for everybody," said head coach Sue Semrau. "You hope to maintain a certain level, but every year, every team is vulnerable to some type of injury that puts you in a tough position or some situation. For us it was our point guard situation that we had to try to find other ways.

"We ended up losing 10 games that we were either tied or ahead in the last four minutes. So you think about that, if you have the pieces, if you have that true point guard, it's a different season all along."

This year things are different. The Seminoles boast six seniors and are able to run a system that's more geared toward their skill-sets. That comes from the emergence of two new point guards and the graduation of last year's star, forward Cierra Bravard (now with the WNBA's

San Antonio Silver Stars).

"I think we were strapped in that way and with the absence of a point guard," Semrau said. "We thought that we had a point guard in place and that was not the situation, it did not work out. Having to move Deluzio to the one spot and having Cierra as one of your biggest assets; that

dictated the way we had to play.”

Bravard’s presence under the hoop limited what Florida State could do on offense last year.

“The object obviously is to score, and in transition you get easy baskets,” said senior guard Alexa Deluzio. “Last year, we couldn’t really run transition because we had Cierra, and not taking anything away from her because she helped us in many ways, but this year we have posts who can run the floor like guards.”

In addition to being able to get into their transition offense and put more athletic bodies on the court, Florida State will also be able to move Deluzio back to her natural two-guard position and insert a true point guard on offense.

“Morgan Toles is already making a huge impact, she only got to play four games last year ... sitting out the first part waiting for her eligibility with the NCAA and then getting injured in her first game,” Semrau said. “So she will be an immediate impact for us. And also another junior college point guard, Yashira Delgado, she should be another immediate impact for us, so you throw in two point guards to a pretty good mix already and we’ll be a different team.”

With their players in their natural positions, Florida State will look to its six senior leaders and junior Natasha Howard (12.2 ppg, 9.1 rpg) to try and get the program back on its winning track.

“Nobody wants to have that taste left in their mouth from last season,” Deluzio said. “The chemistry since I’ve been on the team is the best it’s been the four years I’ve been here, there’s just a lot of leadership.”

“They’ve just poured it on, and that’s exciting for me as a coach,” Semrau said. “I think that there always is that tendency to fear the ‘What if?’ What if we went all out and got the same results as last year? And this team has set out to conquer that and say ‘Huh-uh, we’re going for it, we’re going all out.’ It’s been fun.”

© 2012 Miami Herald Media Company. All Rights Reserved.
<http://www.miamiherald.com>

FSU pounces on Samford in opener

Clayton, Seminoles overwhelm Bulldogs, 77-42

12:17 AM, Nov 12, 2012 |

Written by

Ira Schoffel

Democrat sports editor

They took their first shot just five seconds into the game and recorded their first blocked shot on defense during the very next possession. And from there, the Florida State women's basketball team didn't let up for nearly two hours Sunday afternoon.

Not until senior guard Leonor Rodriguez pulled down the final rebound, and the Seminoles let the final few seconds of a 77-42 victory against visiting Samford roll off the clock.

FSU, which is trying to bounce back from a disappointing 2011-12 season, dominated the Bulldogs in every way imaginable. Led by senior forward Chasity Clayton, who delivered a monster performance with 20 points and 18 rebounds, the Seminoles relentlessly attacked the paint and the glass.

FSU won the rebounding battle by 33 (54-21), and the Seminoles also scored 30 more points in the paint (48-18).

"She had a double-double at halftime," Semrau said of Clayton's 11 points and 12 rebounds in the first period. "She's one of the players in our league that's maybe a little overlooked. ... But I'd throw those stats out the window when I look at what she brought as an attitude tonight."

Indeed, Clayton was not only aggressive going to the offensive glass (she had seven offensive rebounds to go with 11 on defense), but she also anchored an aggressive zone defense that gave the Bulldogs fits all game.

Other than junior guard Kendall Schwantz, who got loose for 19 points on 8-of-11 shooting (3 of 4 from 3-point range), Samford was at a loss for how to attack on offense. Schwantz's teammates connected on just 9 of 45 attempts from the field, and the Bulldogs shot 30.4 percent as a team.

It was a welcome sight for Semrau, whose team struggled with lapses at the defensive end last season.

"I think this is a team that's really learning about team above self," Semrau said. "You have to have that to be a good defensive team. I think we struggled with that last year. We settled in a little bit and this year, this group is willing to take those risks. They are willing to go out and protect each other, and they're really a lot of fun to coach."

Another positive sign came on offense, where the Seminoles introduced a pair of newcomers at point guard. Senior Morgan Toles, an Auburn transfer who actually played in four FSU games midway through last season before sustaining a season-ending injury, got the start and scored four points to go with six assists and four turnovers.

Yashira "Cheetah" Delgado, a junior college transfer who started her career at Arkansas, added five points with six assists and two turnovers. She also won over many in the crowd of 2,138 with scrappy

play in the second half and received an ovation when she left the game with just over four minutes remaining.

“It feels good to be here and play back in Division-I, have a crowd, and of course I feed off of it,” Delgado said. “It gives me more energy to keep doing what I’m doing.”

Aside from Clayton, FSU had four other players finish in double-figures scoring: forward Chelsea Davis (16 points, nine rebounds); guard Alexa Deluzio (12 points, five rebounds); forward Natasha Howard (10 points, four rebounds); and Rodriguez (10 points, three rebounds).

The Seminoles return to action Thursday at home against rival Florida.

FSU women's hoops excited to have two point guards

11:34 PM, Nov 13, 2012 |

Written by
Ira Schoffel
Democrat sports editor

Not long after she sat down at the dais following her team's season-opening victory on Sunday afternoon, Florida State women's basketball coach Sue Semrau wrapped up her opening statement with a simple, yet profound, statement.

"I love having two point guards," she said.

This time a year ago, Semrau might have settled for just one, if it was the right one.

But the player the Seminoles hoped would run the position, Tay'ler Mingo, got off to a rough start and was eventually dismissed from the team. Then every contingency plan Semrau tried seemed to backfire in one way or another.

That's why Semrau and her players were so excited by how transfers Morgan Toles and Yashira "Cheetah" Delgado performed in the opener against Samford. The duo combined to record 12 assists with six turnovers; they also helped the Seminoles jump-start their transition game, which was often lacking last season.

"We've been looking for a point guard for a year now, and now we've got two," junior forward Natasha Howard said. "We can get the ball and just go."

The return of solid point guard play couldn't come at a better time for the Seminoles, who will play host to rival Florida on Thursday. The Gators like to push the tempo on offense and defense, and the Seminoles will rely heavily on Delgado and Toles to handle that pressure.

The point guards actually both started their careers in the Southeastern Conference; Delgado spent one year at Arkansas, and Toles played two seasons at Auburn.

"I think we bring different things, but we do some of the same things too," Toles said. "I'd say she's faster than me. She gets the ball up (the court) really quickly. We both can see the floor. We both can attack and score.

"It's really fun to play with her. She so quick and so fast, and she can see the floor. So when we get out (in transition), we're looking for her. She's gonna throw it up there."

Semrau has been so pleased with the play of her point guards that she has tinkered with playing them at the same time; with Delgado running the offense and Toles playing on the wing.

That combination could certainly be in effect when the Gators bring their full-court press to town.

"I loved it," Semrau said. "I also have to keep in mind that I need to have one of them fresh. But I really loved having them both on the floor."

Seminoles look to run with Gators

11:43 PM, Nov 14, 2012 |

Written by

Ira Schoffel

Democrat sports editor

Given her druthers, Florida State women's basketball coach Sue Semrau would probably prefer to play rival Florida a little later in the season.

Not just because the Gators are a quality opponent, but because they play an up-tempo style that can put major stress on opposing offenses and defenses.

"They like to pressure you," Semrau said. "They like to try to turn you over. They'll take a lot of chances defensively. I really like that we have a couple of point guards this year that are used to handling that type of pressure."

Senior Morgan Toles and junior Yashira "Cheetah" Delgado, both of whom started their careers at Southeastern Conference schools and are playing their first full seasons as Seminoles, likely will share the point guard duties tonight.

And if recent history is any indication, they should consider getting the ball to junior forward Natasha Howard early and often. In her first game against Florida in 2010, Howard scored 17 points and grabbed 10 rebounds. Last season, she racked up 16 points and 10 rebounds.

Florida will be led by senior forward Jennifer George, who earned first-team All-SEC honors last season and posted 19 points and eight rebounds in her only game this season. Sophomore guard Kayla Lewis is averaging 11.5 points and 9.5 rebounds.

The Seminoles (1-0) and Gators (2-0) have split their last four meetings, and two of the last three have been decided by four points or less.

"It's always going to be one of those types of games," Semrau said. "We're excited that it's here, in front of our home fans."

To help ensure a large crowd is in attendance, FSU is making tickets for tonight's game free to youths, ages 18 and under,

"We're all just really excited and hope the fans will come out and support us," Toles said.

FSU outscores UF 28-2 to ignite rout

'Noles romp

12:08 AM, Nov 16, 2012 |

Comments

Florida State women's basketball coach Sue Semrau is uncertain if her surprising tweak to the Seminoles' starting lineup on Thursday is permanent, game-to-game, or a one-time decision.

There's certainly no arguing with the result, even with her two most experienced players – one of whom is on preseason watch lists for the Wooden and Naismith awards – coming off the bench.

Just ask the Florida Gators.

FSU rallied from an early nine-point deficit and buried UF over the game's final 30 minutes in its 98-67 victory.

A thrilled Civic Center crowd of 2,443 watched FSU (2-0) outscore UF (2-1) 28-2 over the final eight minutes of the first half to take control and post the Seminoles' most lopsided victory in the series since 1980.

It was also the largest margin of victory over the Gators in the Semrau Era, eclipsing FSU's 88-66 win in 2006-07.

Maybe even more impressive is that's it's one year removed from the Seminoles' 72-58 defeat in Gainesville.

"I felt like our heart as a team really grew tonight," said Semrau, whose team is home Sunday against Stetson. "One of the things that we have spent an awful lot of time talking about is team over self. "

Let's also add toughness and a short memory to the productive mix.

Semrau started point guards Morgan Toles and Yashira Degaldo to offset the Gators' up-tempo, pressure approach. The duo combined for 14 assists, 12 points and nine rebounds.

The move relegated junior forward Natasha Howard, one of 50 players nationally named to the Naismith Award Early Season Watch List earlier Thursday, to the bench for the first time in her career (64 games).

Redshirt senior Alexa Deluzio also came off the bench for the second consecutive game after starting 62 of 63 games the past two years.

The players embraced their roles. And produced in big ways.

Howard posted her sixth consecutive double-double with 18 points and 11 rebounds, while Deluzio had 18 points.

"(Florida) pressed the entire game," Semrau said.

“What we did to attack it instead was start our two point guards. When you can have an All-American like Natasha Howard on the bench and a kid like Alexa Deluzio who has been amazing in her career and had a great night tonight, that’s selfless basketball and they really bought into that.”

Leonor Rodriguez, starting her second straight game at guard, had a game-high 21 points. Chelsea Davis tallied 16 as FSU placed four players in double-digits.

The Seminoles shot 54.9 percent from the floor (39 for 71) and out-rebounded the Gators 46-36. UF shot 35.6 percent from the field.

“Last year was embarrassing,” Deluzio said.

“This year we came out and remembered last year and how we felt. It was a collective win. Everyone played their role and did great.”

Trailing by six early in the first half, FSU scored 21 consecutive points over the next six minutes to ignite the rout.

FSU stayed hot. Rodriguez nailed back-to-back three-pointers in a 19-second span to give FSU a commanding 62-37 with 15:38 remaining in the contest.

“It was the defense,” Rodriguez said. “It was also the bench, and was also the fans. It was just having fun.

“It was running the floor. It was going hard to the basket. It was us doing our job.”

Florida coach Amanda Butler credited the Seminoles.

“You have to show up with a lot more toughness and awareness than we did,” Butler said.

Semrau, Seminoles ready for return to ACC's elite

FSU women aim to return to ACC's elite

12:19 AM, Oct 15, 2012 |

Comments

Written by

Corey Clark

NoleSports.com editor

Last year was simply unacceptable for Florida State women's basketball coach Sue Semrau.

She had built the program into one of the elite ones of the ACC and had become an annual fixture in the NCAA Tournament. But after suffering through a 14-17 season in 2011-2012, the veteran coach knew something had to change.

"It just was a slap in the face," Semrau said. "It was, how dare we do this to Florida State? And to the past? And I feel like we just didn't fight through the adversity that was presented to us.

"... And for whatever reason I didn't feel like anybody stepped up and changed it. There are things going back and looking at that I would have done differently, that I learned from. And I'm hoping our kids, especially Chasity (Clatyon) and (Alexa Deluzio), who are fifth-year seniors, have learned from as well."

The "fight" theme has been so pervasive for the women's team that Semrau had bracelets made for each member that read "Fight for each other."

Deluzio, who was second on the team in scoring last year at 13.2 points per game, was wearing hers after a recent practice.

"I think it's just instilling a hunger inside of us," she said. "Because the past few years we've underachieved. And I think this year we just want to go get it and fight for what we believe will work for us."

Can she tell a difference already? Less than two weeks into preseason practice?

"I can," Deluzio said. "Just on the court, the work ethic, the speed we go at, the intensity and competitiveness — it's all there."

It's not just a change in mindset that Semrau is working on, though.

There's been a strategic change as well. The FSU coaching staff has decided to switch up its defensive scheme this season, going more to a pressure style up top and on the wings, which calls for more switching on screens than the Seminoles have ever done in the past.

Semrau hopes and expects it to pay off with more steals.

"We're forcing them to come out of their safe mode," Semrau said of her players. "We have to force that, force that action. On the court (in practice) you're going to play defense until you get a steal. You can play as long you like. It forces that aggression."

Aggression that she says was woefully absent a season ago.

“I thought we did play safe,” Semrau said. “Some of that comes from chemistry, leadership. Some of that comes from my ability to create that kind of aggressive mentality. And I think I got spoiled a bit with (former point guard) Courtney Ward. She had that mentality. So I assumed we had that mentality last season. And we didn’t.

“So we’re not assuming anything this year.”

The Seminoles open their season Nov. 3 against Shorter College.