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Seminoles get 'back on track' vs. Charlotte

By [Ira Schoffel](#)

Democrat sports editor

Midway through the second half Sunday afternoon, Charlotte guard Epiphany Woodson drilled a 3-point shot that put the 49ers up by eight points and must have looked awfully familiar to fans of the Florida State women's basketball team.

It was the type of dagger that the Seminoles have struggled to overcome during their recent stretch of heart-breaking losses.

But instead of wilting, FSU closed out the game with an 18-8 run and snapped a three-game losing streak by pulling out a 64-62 victory.

"We've been in a lot of games where we're in that position, and it's great to finally overcome it and win one," said sophomore point guard Olivia Bresnahan, who scored a career-high 10 points. "I think that helps with our confidence a lot. I think we're back on track and ready to go now."

Bresnahan deserves much of the credit. Playing on a badly sprained ankle, which she injured in a freak accident last week during FSU's trip to Ohio State, Bresnahan came off the bench to play 16 minutes in

the second half.

Not only did she help in the scoring column, but she gave FSU (4-5) some needed stability at point guard. Bresnahan also made a key assist to forward Natasha Howard on a play that turned out to be the winning basket.

"A lot of people wouldn't have even stepped out onto the court, and you saw what she was able to do," FSU coach Sue Semrau said. "And that toughness, I think, willed us to win."

FSU had five players reach double-figures in scoring, including Howard (11), Cierra Bravard (11), Alexa Deluzio (14) and Chelsea Davis (13).

And after committing 10 turnovers in the first half, the Seminoles had just five in the second.

"We've been working on winning those close-game situations at the end of the game," Deluzio said. "And I thought we did

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a great job doing that."

Charlotte, which fell to 5-3, was led by forward Jennifer Hailey (20 points, 10 rebounds) and Woodson (10).

FSU Women's Basketball

NEXT GAME

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FSU looks to end losing ways

By [Ira Schoffel](#)

Democrat sports editor

Junior guard Alexa Deluzio has seen many things during her years on the Florida State women's basketball team.

Buzzer-beaters and blowouts, dramatic victories and heartbreaking defeats, and just about everything in between.

But Deluzio has never, ever, experienced anything remotely like this.

After opening the season with a pair of convincing victories, FSU has lost five of its past six games. And perhaps more bothersome than the fact that the Seminoles are losing is the way they are losing.

Three of those five losses have come by three points apiece — 55-52 to Arkansas, 66-63 to Nebraska and 78-75 in overtime to Ohio State.

"It's frustrating when you work so hard and you don't see the result that you ultimately work for," Deluzio said. "And it's hard in those moments to push through that and keep working hard when you don't necessarily get the results you want. But we still have 20 games to go.

"We have a whole season in front of us, and

we're going to be OK."

The Ohio State loss might have been the most frustrating of all.

Playing against a top-20 team on the road, FSU dominated for most of the night. But despite playing perhaps its best game of the season, it squandered a late lead and eventually lost in overtime.

Instead of dwelling on the final outcome, though, Deluzio said FSU coach Sue Semrau is encouraging her players to focus on the positives. She wants them to build upon the progress they made in the early stages and not worry about the late swoon.

"Everybody's frustrated right now," Deluzio said. "But the Ohio State game, and our last loss previous to that, we've really had a lot of team chemistry. Coach Sue talked about it a lot in the locker room — we're really growing each game. We really are. We're making tremendous strides."

Added sophomore forward Natasha

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Howard: "It's kind of stressful because we're losing against good teams that we know we could have (beat). But as a team, we're coming together."

The Seminoles will get to see what type of progress they've made when they return to action today at home against visiting Charlotte. And the visiting 49ers will present a challenge — they are 5-2 on the season, with one of their victories coming against Virginia Tech.

But FSU's players say they are more concerned about themselves than their opponents.

"We just have to figure out a way (in) the second half, the last three or four minutes, to really close the game out," Deluzio said.

FSU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

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Women's basketball: Hill's career night lifts Buckeyes in OT thriller

By [Jim Massie](#)

The Columbus Dispatch

In one of the wilder finishes in the history of Value City Arena, Tayler Hill helped the Ohio State women's basketball team turn what looked like a certain loss into a 78-75 overtime victory over Florida State last night in the Big Ten/Atlantic Coast Conference Challenge.

Hill scored a career-high 31 points to keep the 17th-ranked Buckeyes undefeated at 6-0. She got eight points in the final 36.8 seconds of regulation, including a layup with less than a second remaining to tie the score at 69 and force overtime.

In overtime, with point guard Samantha Prahalis on the bench after fouling out, Hill gave the Buckeyes a 76-75 lead with another layup with 31 seconds remaining and added two free throws to seal the victory.

"We were just determined," Hill said. "I feel like if we had played that way the whole game, we would not have been in that situation."

The situation was a 65-58 deficit with 2:04 left in regulation, largely the result of a dozen second-half turnovers. Freshman Raven Ferguson started the comeback with a three-pointer, and the Seminoles (3-5) began missing free throws.

"It was crazy," Prahalis said of Hill's performance. "It's not at all surprising. We know Tayler is a great player. Down the stretch, I had complete faith in her."

Sophomore center Ashley Adams, who had not scored in the previous two games, had 13 to go with 14 rebounds, three blocked shots and two steals.

She was credited with a steal with 14 seconds left in overtime after getting tied up with Florida State center Cierra Bravard. Seminoles coach Sue Semrau said she thought the whistle came quick.

"I was shocked," she said. "That's all I can say. I thought it was extremely quick. But that's the call that was made. We had an opportunity at the end again, even though that was unfortunate."

Bravard led the Seminoles with 27 points and 12 rebounds. Once an Ohio State recruiting target, the Sandusky, Ohio, native was a handful on the inside all game for Adams and the Buckeyes' other post players.

“It was a great game,” Bravard said. “It was back and forth. The whole team played extremely hard. The outcome was unfortunate. Every game we’ve gotten a little bit closer and we’ve gotten a lot better.”

The Buckeyes, meanwhile, continue to win. Prahalis finished with 11 points and 11 assists. Kalpana Beach had 11 points and eight rebounds, and Hill’s line included six steals and seven rebounds.

The Buckeyes looked like they had control of the game in the second half until the Seminoles began converting turnovers into points.

“I just felt like I couldn’t do anything right,” Prahalis said. “But Tayler stepped up. Everyone stepped up when they needed to. The good thing I’m out and they’re stepping up. It ended great.”

Ohio State coach Jim Foster credited Hill with carrying the team.

“She wanted the responsibility of the game, and made plays and made shots and defended,” he said. “That’s what good players do.”

jmassie@dispatch.com

« OSU Women's Basketball

Hill leads Buckeyes to comeback win over Florida State

Taylor Hill scored a career high 31 points to lead the Ohio State women's basketball team to a 78-75 overtime victory over Florida State last night in a Big Ten/Atlantic Coast Conference game in Value City Arena.

Hill knifed in for a layup with 31 seconds remaining to give the 17th-ranked Buckeyes (6-0) the lead and complete a remarkable comeback. She added two free throws with 14 seconds left to finish a 31-point. Ohio State closed out the win with senior point guard Samantha Prahalis on the bench with five fouls.

The junior guard had forced the overtime by hitting two three-pointers in the final minute and going the length of the floor to nail a layup with less than a second to play in regulation and tie the game at 69-69.

Hill said the game among her best "because I had to step up and make good plays at the end."

But she scanned the rest of the stat sheet/

"Sam had a double-double tonight," Hill said. "She sat out all overtime and at the end of the game, she's got 11 assists and 11 points."

Sophomore Ashley Adams had 13 points and 14 rebounds. Freshman forward Kalpana Beach contributed 11 points and eight rebounds. Adams had a steal in overtime that set up the final two free throws for Hill.

"We came together as a team when we needed to," Hill said.

Cierra Bravard led Florida State with 27 points. She and Adams had a dust-up at the end of the game.

"Cierra was going to foul (Adams) at the end of the game," Florida State coach Sue Semrau said. "Ashley took it as she was going after her. That's not Cierra's personality whatsoever."

The Buckeyes saw it differently.

"She ran into Ashley and Ashley stood her ground," Hill said. "Then she tried to get into (Beach's) face. That was it."

The sour ending came as a surprise after the back-and-forth contest.

Ohio State led by eight points at 44-36 after a three-point basket by Hill with 16:50 remaining in the game.

The lead was still eight at 48-40 three minutes later when a string of Ohio State turnovers allowed Florida State to close the gap. Three of the miscues belonged to Prahalis.

Two turned into scores at the other end and the mistakes continued even after Hill went coast to coast for a layup after the fifth of her six steals in the game.

Florida State led 65-58 with 1:22 left when Raven Ferguson hit a three-pointer for OSU. Bravard answered with two free throws at the 47-second mark before Hill took over. She knocked down a three-pointer with 34 seconds remaining to make it 67-64. Natasha Howard split two free throws for Florida State and Hill hit another three-pointer five seconds later to make it 68-67.

When Tay'ler Mingo split two more free throws for Florida State, Hill drove the length of the court with the made the layup with less than a second remaining to tie the game.

In the first half, Florida State moved to an 11-4 lead before Hill broke the drought with two field goals. Prahalis followed with an 8-foot jumper and the Buckeyes went ice cold again.

Alexa Deluzio started a run for the Seminoles with an offensive putback. Bravard then had consecutive three-point plays to jump the Florida State lead to 18-10.

Deluzio would drop in three jumpers over the next 4½ minutes to push the advantage to 24-16 with 6:55 left in the half. The deficit grew to 26-17 before the Buckeyes found their way back into the game with defense.

Hill stripped Chastity Clayton of the ball and hit a three-pointer. A steal by Amber Stokes led to a Martina Ellerbe score that cut the Florida State lead to 26-24.

Leonor Rodriguez blunted the comeback with a three-pointer, but Hill stole the ball again and her layup had the Buckeyes within 29-26. Another steal by Stokes set up a pair of free throws by Hill.

Natasha Howard scored inside for Florida State before Prahalis tied the game at 31-31 with a three-pointer. Stokes then gave the Buckeyes their first lead since the 17:36 mark with a steal and layup.

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Natasha's family finally to see her play collegiately

Written by Nathan Lowe
Tuesday, 06 December 2011 14:46

Florida State's Natasha Howard quickly established herself as one of the nation's top freshman last season.

The 2010 Waite graduate arrived in Tallahassee as one of the highest-rated recruits in college basketball, and she has lived up to lofty expectations.

"I just stayed humble and came to Florida State knowing what I had to do," Howard said. "I just made sure I was focused and ready for anything that came at me."

Howard, a 6-foot-3 wing/forward, started all 32 games and earned freshman All-American and All-ACC Freshman Team honors.

She demonstrated versatility on the court, ranking fourth on the Seminoles in scoring (10.6 pts.) and second in rebounding (6.6 reb.). She continues to work on her all-around game and is improving each day.

"I worked on my free throws, jump shots and strength (in the offseason)," she said. "I wanted to be able to get to the offensive and defensive boards."

Howard's hard work has paid off. She leads the team in rebounding through six games (9.6) and is among the team's leading scorers (8.9 pts).

In a season-opening win over South Florida, she hauled in a career-best 13 rebounds and chipped in 10 points to record her fourth career double-double. On Nov. 17, in a loss to Florida, Howard scored a season-high 16 points.

Florida State, No. 21 in the preseason AP poll, is off to a 4-2 start. The Seminoles are looking to qualify for the NCAA Tournament for the eighth consecutive season and win 20 games for the fourth year in a row.

Fitting in at FSU

Howard is quickly earning the respect of her teammates and coaches. All-American center Cierra Bravard, a 6-4 senior from Sandusky Perkins, expects Howard to only get better as she gains more experience.

"Coming in as good of a player as she was, your first year really humbles you," Bravard told Seminoles.com, FSU's official athletic site. "For me, I didn't know what to expect and I am sure she felt the same way."

Bravard also praised Howard's attitude and work ethic.

"She's not negative about anything, and she is always willing to give more and do more to get better."

Howard said Bravard helped ease her transition from high school to college.

"She's a good leader," Howard said of her team's leading scorer. "She always has my back. If something isn't going right, she's there to talk to me and tell me that everything is going to be OK."

"When I came in my freshman year, I was kind of nervous," she said. "I didn't really know what was going on at first, but I had good leaders that helped me out. The (upperclassmen) pushed me hard all the time in practice and told me I can do this."

Fifteenth-year coach Sue Semrau, a three-time winner of the ACC Coach of the Year award, also has the utmost faith in her super sophomore.

"Natasha had a nice freshman year," Semrau said. "I think that she hasn't even scratched the surface of what she is capable of doing. ...She has really worked hard on her footwork and her strength. I think she will be a dominating presence on offense and defense."

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Howard's Homecoming

Howard is looking forward to returning to Ohio on Wednesday when her 'Noles battle Ohio State in Columbus.

She said her family, which has never had the opportunity to watch her play in Tallahassee, will be rooting her on at Value City Arena.

"I can't wait to play in front of my family and friends," she said. "Some of my old high school teammates, coaches and staff are going to be at the game."

Howard is not unfamiliar with Columbus.

She helped Waite to a 24-3 finish her senior year and led the team on a memorable tournament run that ended at Value City Arena. Canton McKinley defeated Waite in the state finals, 49-47, despite 23 points, 14 rebounds, eight steals and four blocks from the All-Ohio first-teamer.

She averaged 24.7 points and 11 rebounds while shooting over 50 percent from the field during her senior season and was named Ohio Ms. Basketball.

All of her success earned her a spot in the McDonald's All-American game — in Columbus — where she scored 20 points and was named co-MVP.

"I was happy that I had the opportunity to play with the other great players around the country and play in front of my hometown fans," she said.

Manny May, Howard's coach at Waite, is one of the many East Toledoans who plans on making the short drive to Columbus on Wednesday.

"It's exciting," May said. "We have a couple of busloads going down to watch her play.

"It will be an inspiring game for her," he said. "Just seeing the people that she knows and loves and her friends and family members, I think it will give her a boost to her game. I expect her to play with a lot of energy."

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Tallahassee.com

FSU trio excited for trip to back home to Ohio

By [Ira Schoffel](#)

Democrat sports editor

Dozens of friends and family will be in the stands.

There will be familiar faces on the Ohio State bench as well.

But for Florida State's Tay'ler Mingo, tonight's trip to Columbus, Ohio, will offer another type of reunion. The Seminoles' sophomore point guard will get to play on the same Value City Arena court where she won a state championship as a high school junior.

"I miss the court," Mingo said with a smile.

Mingo, an Akron native who led Regina High School to a 27-0 record that season, is one of three FSU women's basketball players who hail from the state of Ohio. All three won state player-of-the-year honors during their prep careers.

Senior post player Cierra Bravard is from Sandusky, and sophomore forward Natasha Howard is from Toledo. Bravard and Howard also took their respective high school teams to Value City Arena, but neither was able to walk away with a trophy.

That doesn't mean they are any less excited about the chance to play back home as part of the ACC/Big Ten Challenge.

"It's exciting to know that our families are going to be there," Bravard said. "It's going to be a great matchup. We can't let coming home be a distraction, but instead a motivation to play well and to play hard."

That has been the message all week from FSU coach Sue Semrau, who already had scheduled a December game at the University of Akron to make sure Bravard got to play in her home state at least once before she graduated.

Semrau likes for her players to get a chance to play in front of "home" crowds, but she also knows that these nights can be challenging.

"We need to really zero in and narrow our focus come game time," Semrau said. "Because I think a lot of those emotions can play into games like this, in a good way or

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a bad way. And we really need to be intentional about our focus."

Even without the distractions, facing Ohio State on the road will be a tough task. The Buckeyes are 5-0 and ranked No. 18 in the country.

They are led by senior point guard Samantha Prahalis, who is an exceptional all-around player. She averages 19.6 points per game, has an assist-to-turnover ratio of nearly 3-to-1, and she averages 5.0 rebounds.

"They have a great fan base up there, and they have a great point guard in Samantha Prahalis," Semrau said. "She finds lots of opportunities to distribute the basketball to her teammates, but she's also scoring 19 a game. So we'll have to focus in on shutting her down."

The trip to Ohio State also will be special for FSU assistant coach Brooke Wyckoff, who is a native Ohioan as well.

TODAY'S GAME

ACC/Big Ten Challenge: Florida State at Ohio State, 8:30 p.m.
TV: Big Ten Network
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Nebraska edges past Seminoles

By [Ira Schoffel](#)

Democrat sports editor

It wasn't the possession that cost the Florida State women's basketball team Sunday's game against visiting Nebraska, but it was indicative of the Seminoles' second-half swoon.

After the Cornhuskers erased a double-digit, second-half lead and went ahead by two points with less than a minute remaining, FSU coach Sue Semrau called a play that appeared to be designed for star center Cierra Bravard to receive the ball in the low post.

But with two Nebraska defenders crowding around Bravard, FSU junior Chasity Clayton launched an open 3-pointer that skimmed across the rim, and the Cornhuskers went on to secure a 66-63 victory.

"We didn't do a good job in the second half of getting Cierra the ball," Semrau said. "She was 7-for-7 in the first half, and their guard pressure I thought was the difference in the second half."

After scoring 15 points in the first half, Bravard scored just three points in the second to finish with a game-high 18. The senior attempted just two shots after halftime, and she scored her last point on a free throw with more than seven minutes

remaining.

FSU fell to 3-4, while Nebraska improved to 6-0.

"Obviously today was a disappointment, but I have to say I am proud of my team," Semrau said. "I'm proud of the energy that they brought. We haven't been the most in-sync team, and I thought the energy that we continued to bring throughout the course of the game was a great step for us. I think the execution down the stretch on either end wasn't what we wanted it to be."

FSU led for most of the game, but the Seminoles went cold in the second half when they were unable to feed the ball to Bravard. They didn't connect on a single field goal during a stretch that lasted more than eight minutes.

Four Nebraska players scored in double-figures: guard Lindsey Moore (15), forward Emily Cady (14), forward Jordan Hooper (12) and guard Brandi Jeffery (12).

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Junior guard Alexa Deluzio chipped in 13 points for FSU, and Clayton added 10, along with a game-high nine rebounds.

After losing four of its last five games, FSU will continue its rigorous early season schedule with a road trip Wednesday to Ohio State. The Buckeyes are another top-20 opponent and are 5-0 on the season.

FSU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Next Game

•Wednesday: FSU at Ohio State, 8:30 p.m.

•TV: Big Ten Network

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•FSU volleyball team earns No. 12 seed for NCAA Volleyball Championship, **Page 2**.

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FSU looks to bounce back against Nebraska

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By [Ira Schoffel](#)
Democrat sports editor

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The Florida State women's basketball team won't have to wait long for a chance to rebound from a disappointing home loss Friday night.

Less than 48 hours after falling to No. 12 Louisville, the Seminoles will play host to Nebraska today at 2 p.m. And that quick turnaround suits FSU coach Sue Semrau just fine.

Though the Seminoles are not pleased about getting off to a 3-3 start, Semrau believes her players will benefit from such a challenging nonconference slate.

"It's early," Semrau said. "We have a chance to continue to grow with the tough schedule that we've put in front of us."

FSU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

TODAY'S GAME

- Nebraska at Florida State, 2 p.m.
- Radio: 100.7 FM

That rigorous schedule will continue later this week when the Seminoles will travel to face another top-20 opponent in Ohio State.

But first, FSU will take on Nebraska and look to improve on the areas that doomed them against Louisville. The Seminoles committed 24 turnovers and allowed the Cardinals to score 40 of their 85 points in the paint.

But the biggest problem, according to Semrau, was inconsistency at both ends of the floor.

"We're a basketball team right now in search of our identity," Semrau said. "During spurts, you saw a pretty good team. And then we'd have a spurt that isn't who we want to be."

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Louisville handles FSU women, 85-76

By [Ira Schoffel](#)

Democrat sports editor

The Florida State women's basketball team made big runs to erase double-digit deficits in each half Friday night against visiting Louisville.

But just as the Seminoles pulled even with them, the No. 12 Cardinals stepped on the gas and eventually sped away with an 85-76 victory.

"They're a top-25 team, and we're at their home place, so we just came out with that (mentality that) we were throwing the first punch," said sophomore guard Shoni Schimmel, who led Louisville with 25 points. "And that's exactly what we did."

The Cardinals led by 11 points in the first half and 12 in the second, but the Seminoles responded each time to make things interesting.

Late in the first half, FSU tied the game at 39-39 on a layup by sophomore guard Olivia Bresnahan. But Louisville scored the final seven points of the half, including five from Schimmel, to take a 46-39 lead into the break.

The Seminoles' next big charge came late in the second half, when they erased a 66-56 deficit with a 10-0 run that took slightly

more than two minutes. But with a crowd of 2,487 up on its feet, Louisville coach Jeff Walz elected not to call a timeout and instead let Schimmel do what she does best.

The sharp-shooting sophomore, who earned Freshman All-American honors last season, drilled a 3-pointer from long range and put the Cardinals up for good.

"I'm not gonna bail them out all the time by calling a timeout," Walz said. "We've got to learn early, in my opinion, to be able to fight through some adversity. ... "(After the shot), you could see a little life back in us. And it kind of took a little life out of them."

Florida State (3-3) did most of its damage inside, with senior center Cierra Bravard connecting on 8 of 12 shots from the field and a perfect 11 of 11 from the free-throw line. Bravard scored a career-high 27 points, and forwards Natasha Howard and Chasity Clayton added 13 and 11, respectively.

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"It's great to have a career high, but at the same time, we weren't focused on the defensive end," Bravard said. "Anyone on the team can score 50 points, but if we're not getting defensive stops, it's not going to do us any good."

Junior Alexa Deluzio, who is playing out of position at point guard while sophomore Tay'ler Mingo tries to work her way into the starting lineup, added 12 points.

But even with four players in double-figures, the Seminoles couldn't keep up with the Cardinals, who improved to 5-1.

"We fought back, but we didn't bear down (defensively) when we had the opportunity," Semrau said.

"We had every opportunity to close that game out," Deluzio said. "I felt like when we made that run, we needed to just nail 'em. And we didn't do that."

FSU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

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'Noles women's basketball team thumps Panthers

By [Ira Schoffel](#)

Democrat sports editor

Usually it's during a road trip that Florida State women's basketball coach Sue Semrau has to worry how her youngest players will perform in a new environment.

On Monday night, Semrau got to experience that feeling at home.

Ten days — and four games — after opening the 2011-12 season, the FSU women's team finally played its first home game, against visiting Georgia State.

"It's good to be home," Semrau said. "We're pretty deep into the season for it being our first home game."

And the Seminoles adjusted to the Civic Center nicely. After a sluggish start, they dominated Georgia State in the second half and rolled to a 94-74 victory.

Led by junior forward Chelsea Davis, who came off the bench to score a career-high 25 points, FSU finished with four players in double-figures scoring. Junior guard Alexa Deluzio scored 20 points, junior forward Chasity Clayton added 18 points, and senior center Cierra Bravard added 11.

The convincing victory was a welcome sight for the Seminoles, who went 2-2 in their four games away from home, beating South Florida and Minnesota before falling to Arkansas and Florida.

"We needed it," Deluzio said. "This is going to build our confidence, and we're going to carry it over into the next game."

Davis, who is 6-foot-2 and athletic, overpowered Georgia State's front line all night. She connected on 8 of 15 shots from the field, and she was 9 of 15 from the free-throw line.

Davis' previous career high was 18 points.

"I always feel really good about Chelsea's ability to finish," Semrau said. "And I thought the guards did a great job of getting her the ball ... and the post players. Maybe more of an unsung hero in that (are) the people that got her the ball.

"But she's really been playing well in practice, and this is what we're expecting."

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FSU (3-2) will continue its home stand with games Friday against visiting Louisville and Sunday against Nebraska.

NEXT GAME

Friday: Louisville at Florida State, 7 p.m.
Radio: 100.7 FM.

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The Miami Herald

Posted on Mon, Nov. 21, 2011

Davis lifts Florida State past Georgia State 94-74

The Associated Press

Florida State looked to its bench for some scoring help to halt the Seminoles' two-game losing streak.

Chelsea Davis scored a career-high 25 points and Alexa Deluzio added 20 points and eight rebounds as Florida State pulled away to win its home opener 94-74 over Georgia State on Monday night.

Davis, a junior forward, shot 8 of 15 from the floor and 9 of 15 from the free-throw line for the Seminoles (3-2). Her previous career high was 18 points against Virginia in January.

"I always feel really good about Chelsea's ability to finish," Florida State coach Sue Semrau said. "She's really been playing well in practice. This is what we're expecting from her from here on out."

Chasity Clayton added 18 points and eight rebounds and Cierra Bravard had 11 points and nine rebounds for the Seminoles, who fell from the Top 25 on Monday afternoon after losses to Arkansas and Florida.

Florida State has not lost three straight games since the 2003-04 season.

"We needed it," Deluzio said of the win. "This is going to build our confidence. We're going to carry it over into the next game and win that game and carry it over into the next game."

Kendra Long scored 18 points and Chan Harris fouled out with 12 points and seven rebounds for Georgia State (0-2), which made 7 of 13 (53.8 percent) of its 3-point attempts.

Florida State broke open a 29-29 game by going on a 10-2 run, punctuated by six points from Davis, to finish the first half. The Seminoles shot 16 of 35 (45.7 percent) from the floor in the second half to pull away.

Georgia State had 18 turnovers.

Florida State won its home opener for the 13th straight season. The Seminoles are 68-9 in nonconference home games since the start of the 2000-01 season.

Deluzio made 10 of 12 free throws for FSU, which made 33 of 43 (76.7 percent) from the line.

Florida State outrebounded Georgia State 48-34.

The Seminoles play host to No. 11 Louisville on Friday.



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Women's hoops tops No. 21 FSU

By Jim Harvin

Correspondent

Published: Thursday, November 17, 2011 at 10:57 p.m.

Seldom are there big wins this early in the season. But rest assured Florida's 72-58 victory over 21st-ranked Florida State Thursday night before an O'Connell Center crowd of 1,935 definitely qualifies.

Getting a tremendous team effort that included four of five starters scoring in double digits, head coach Amanda Butler's fired-up Gators (2-1) took it to the favored Seminoles (2-2) from the opening tip and never trailed en route to an impressive win that had Butler exchanging high-fives to anybody and everybody within reach afterward.

"Obviously I'm just thrilled to death for our team and in particular our seniors and our post players who worked really, really hard," Butler said. "They knew they had their hands full, and their coaches were challenging them, telling them that we were still going to bring this battle to the paint, even though that's the toughest place to play."

As expected, FSU's powerful inside duo of senior preseason All-America Cierra Bravard and talented sophomore Natasha Howard was impressive, combining for 38 of the Seminoles' 58 points and 19 rebounds. But Florida senior Azania Stewart and junior Jennifer George held their own, combining for 32 points, 10 boards and six blocked shots and frustrating Bravard into fouling out with 3:48 left to play.

Florida's guards, meanwhile, were a step too quick for their FSU counterparts, with sophomore point guard Jaterra Bonds enjoying her best game of the season with a 14-point, six-rebound effort and senior Jordan Jones adding 14 points to join George (18 points), who was 9-of-11 from the field, and Stewart (10 points) in double-digits.

While the Gators shot a solid 46.2 percent (29-of-62) from the field, they held FSU to just 35.5 percent (22-of-62). FSU did outrebound Florida, but only by a slim 41-38 margin, and the Gators were the better team on the floor, holding a 17-10 edge in assists, a 9-7 advantage in steals and a 6-1 edge in blocks.

The key segment of the game was the last four minutes of the first half. After UF had taken a 21-8 lead in the game's first eight minutes, the 'Noles roared back behind Bravard and Howard to pull within 27-23 with 4:08 remaining before halftime.

The Gators refused to fold, however, and answered with a 14-4 run keyed by Bonds and Jones to close out the half and take a 41-27 lead into the locker room, from which FSU never recovered.

"It was huge," Butler said. "When we talk about this team, a lot of times we're talking about them relative to things in the past. I think today was just a giant leap forward for this group, to be able to create a lead with their defense and fend off a very potent offensive team.

"We knew they would make a run at us, but to be able to answer and sustain the effort and sustain the energy, I was really proud of that. This was a great win for us."

UF closes out its season-opening, four-game homestand against Hampton Tuesday at 7 p.m.

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Tallahassee.com

No. 13 FSU will be tested right away

By [Corey Clark](#)
NoleSports.com editor

It's not exactly a normal start to a season.

But the Florida State women's basketball team will certainly find out quite a bit about itself this week in Daytona at the WBI Tipoff Classic.

The No. 13 Seminoles play three games in three days, against teams from three BCS conferences.

"I wrote it on the board (on Tuesday) – Big East, Big 10, SEC," FSU head coach Sue Semrau said. "Where else have you seen an opportunity of three games of that caliber in three days?"

"The ACC tournament."

So the beginning is a rehearsal for the end. Which is fine with Semrau, whose team opens with South Florida today and then plays Minnesota on Saturday and Arkansas on Sunday.

"You've got to treat this as an opportunity for what we'll face at the end of the year," she said.

She knows it will be tough. It's never easy to play on a quick turnaround. And starting a season with three games in three days

will test her players physically and mentally.

Which isn't such a bad thing actually.

"I think we can get a lot of positives out of it," Semrau said. "... As a coach when you're preparing them early you always tell them they're not good enough. But the truth is we are good enough to be in this situation and go out and have success."

Said senior All-American candidate Cierra Bravard: "It's a good test for us. That's a lot of games to play. You really have to be mentally strong to turn your mind from one team to another team to another team three days in a row.

"But it will be a good test for us to see how mentally focused we are."

After the WBI Classic, the Seminoles will travel to Gainesville on Nov. 17 to take on rival Florida. Their first home game is Nov. 21 vs. Georgia State.

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FSU headlines tourney at Ocean Center

By SEAN KERNAN, STAFF WRITER 

Today

2 p.m.: Minnesota vs. Florida State

4:30 p.m.: USF vs. Arkansas

Sunday

2 p.m.: Florida State vs. Arkansas

4:30 p.m.: Minnesota vs. USF

DAYTONA BEACH -- The Women's Basketball Invitational Tipoff going on this weekend at the Ocean Center isn't very big.

But what the WBIT lacks in numbers, it's made up for in quality.

It's big-time college hoops; no mid-majors here.

No. 14 Florida State headlines the four-team, round-robin tournament that began Friday with the Seminoles defeating South Florida 62-49 and Minnesota turning back Arkansas 68-60.

Think about it. The Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten, Big East and Southeastern Conference are represented. These teams are staying at the beach, but these three games to open the 2011-12 season are anything but a vacation.

"Whew! It certainly is," FSU coach Sue Semrau said when asked if this was a powerhouse tournament. "Generally, you see teams going against a conference that maybe isn't as strong. When you look at playing teams from the Big East, Big Ten and SEC back-to-back-to-back, really the only time you see that caliber (on consecutive days) again is the ACC Tournament. So we're talking about it like this is an ACC-caliber tournament, and it's going to help us get ready."

This wasn't the way the promoter, Sports Tours International, wanted the tournament to be, but it's the way things turned out.

"We were hoping to get eight teams," tournament director Emily Bauer said. "Arkansas was the first team to commit. Then Minnesota jumped in, and Florida State and USF. Once we had them it really took on the look of a BCS tournament, and it gave pause to some of the mid-majors that were interested. They reconsidered their options."

The end result turned out to be pretty impressive, however.

"We're really happy with the quality of the teams we ended up with," said Bauer, who coached women's college basketball for 20 years.

FSU is coming off its seventh straight NCAA Tournament appearance, and the WBIT should help the Seminoles prepare for an eighth.

"We're a program that wants to go deeper into the NCAA Tournament year after year, so we put together a schedule that I think really compares to anybody's in the country," said Semrau, a three-time ACC Coach of the Year. "You come down here and have (the players') attention right off the bat. I like that about it. I also like playing in another place in Florida so our Seminole fans can come out."

FSU, MINNESOTA WIN:

No. 14

ranked Florida State used a double-double by sophomore forward **Natasha Howard** (10 points, 13 rebounds) and a career-high 12 points by second-year point guard **Tay'ler Mingo** to defeat South Florida 62-49 Friday in the Women's Basketball Invitational at the Ocean Center in Daytona Beach.

Alexa Deluzio, **Cierra Bravard** and **Chelsea Davis** each chipped in 11 points.

USF's **Caitlyn Rowe** led all scorers with 19 points.

Minnesota topped Arkansas 68-60 in the tournament's opening game. **Rachel Banham** led the Golden Gophers with 15 points, **Kiara Buford** scored 13 and **Katie Loberg** added 12.

Arkansas' **Sarah Watkins** had a game-high 18 points, while **Lyndsay Harris** came of the bench to score 17 for the Razorbacks.

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Tallahassee.com

Clayton shines in FSU women's basketball exhibition

By [Ira Schoffel](#)

Democrat sports editor

Even before her team started practicing for the 2011-12 season, Florida State women's basketball coach Sue Semrau had a hunch junior forward Chasity Clayton was primed for a breakout-type season.

On Saturday afternoon, during the Seminoles' lone preseason exhibition, Clayton showed exactly why her coach was excited. Showing off improved ball-handling and shooting touch, Clayton scored a game-high 23 points to lead FSU past Florida Southern, 98-46, at the Civic Center.

While this was Clayton's first chance to display her improvement in front of fans, most of the hard work actually took place months ago.

"I just had a different mindset than I've ever had in my years at Florida State," said Clayton, who came off the bench last season to average 6.9 points and 4.0 rebounds per game. "I think I just matured."

After relying heavily on her vast physical

skills during her first two seasons at FSU, Clayton took a more business-like approach to this offseason.

"When you make that choice and then you carry out the work," Semrau said, "then the reward is what you saw her do tonight."

Clayton, who is making the transition from power forward to small forward, connected on 9 of 14 shots from the field, was a perfect 5 of 5 from the free-throw line and collected six rebounds.

Clayton was one of four FSU starters to reach double-figures in scoring against Florida Southern, a Division-II school in Lakeland. Sophomore forward Natasha Howard scored 18 points and grabbed eight rebounds; junior guard Alexa Deluzio scored 15 and grabbed five boards; and senior center Cierra Bravard added 10 points and four rebounds.

Junior forward Chelsea Davis also came off the bench to score 15 points and grab a game-high nine rebounds.

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Semrau wasn't thrilled with her team's overall performance — particularly the fact that the Seminoles missed several good shot opportunities in the first half — but she said it will be helpful as they prepare for Friday night's season opener against South Florida in a Daytona Beach tournament.

"It's always hard to gauge where you are until you get out on the floor and the lights come on," Semrau said. "We saw a lot of things that we need to work on some bright spots as well."

SEASON OPENER

Friday: FSU vs. South Florida at WBI Tipoff Classic in Daytona Beach, 4:30 p.m.

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Defense the focal point for Seminoles

By [Corey Clark](#)

NoleSports.com editor

The mission of this preseason for the Florida State women's basketball team has been pretty simple.

And it was understood from Day 1, according to head coach Sue Semrau.

"I don't think we were a good defensive team last year," she said. "We had a veteran leader in Courtney (Ward) who could pull us out of some situations that we shouldn't have been in. We were in a situation in our final game (a second-round loss to Georgia in the NCAA Tournament) where she couldn't pull us out.

"That wasn't anybody's fault but our defense. So that's something we're really putting a lot of emphasis on right now."

The message has been received.

Senior All-American candidate Cierra Bravard said the team has been working harder on that side of the court than it has since she's been in Tallahassee. The players know if they're going to do special things in the 2011-2012 season it will start with defense.

"We're a really good team," Bravard said. "We have a lot of talent. It's just a matter of

putting it all together. I think right now our biggest challenge is definitely on the defensive end. That's going to win us a lot of games and that's going to take us deep into the tournament.

"So that's really our main focus right now."

The Seminoles already know they can score. With Bravard, junior Alexa Deluzio and sophomore Natasha Howard they might just have one of the best scoring trios in the country.

And Semrau thinks her team has a chance to be exceptional on the other end as well.

"We have the potential to be a great defensive team," she said. "We're long. We're quick. We've got great size. We've just got to learn how to trust. It's making sure that you do your job and you know that if you take a risk someone is going to cover you."

Florida State, which is ranked 14th in the first AP preseason poll of the year, will play

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Florida Southern College in an exhibition game Saturday afternoon in the Civic Center. The Seminoles' opener is on Nov. 11 in the WBI Tipoff Classic against South Florida.

FSU Women's BASKETBALL

Next game

•Saturday: Florida Southern College at FSU (exhibition), 2 p.m.

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Miami the overwhelming pick to win 1st ACC women's basketball title

By Associated Press, Published: October 18

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Times are changing in Atlantic Coast Conference women's basketball; it's out with the old and in with the new.

The favorite to win the ACC championship is Miami, the best preseason projection for the Hurricanes since they joined the league in 2004. The preseason all-league team announced Tuesday includes players from Miami, Maryland and Florida State — but not bluebloods Duke or North Carolina.

“It just shows that this is a great conference, that the sport is always evolving,” said Miami guard Shenise Johnson, the league's preseason player of the year.

“It's about time,” she added. “You need new faces, new teams, different colleges. You don't want the same people winning all the time, so it's actually good that we have different people around.”

The Hurricanes received 30 of a possible 40 first-place votes by the league's panel of school representatives and media members. Two-time reigning ACC tournament champion Duke was picked to finish second and received the other 10 first-place votes.

It's the first time since 1995 — and only the fourth time since the league began preseason balloting in 1991 — that a school other than Duke, North Carolina or Maryland was the preseason pick to win the league. And it represents a remarkable turnaround for a Miami senior class that finished tied for 10th in the ACC when they were both freshmen and sophomores.

“They deserve that spot,” North Carolina State coach Kellie Harper said. “As far as preseason polls are concerned, that's probably as accurate as you can get it.”

It's certainly hard to argue with the Hurricanes' resume.

Reigning national coach of the year Katie Meier returns all five starters — and, for that matter, the entire team — after Miami went 28-5 last season and shared the ACC regular-season title with Duke before suffering a pair of surprising postseason losses. The Hurricanes were knocked out in the semifinals of the ACC tournament by North Carolina before Oklahoma eliminated them in the second round of the NCAA tournament.

“It’s been a climb. It’s been really arduous and it’s been difficult,” Meier said. “It’s been stressful and scrappy, and everything that you think it has been. It has not been easy. It’s not easy now, either. That same mentality, that same effort, that same scrappiness — if I see any of that missing, we’re going to have a problem, but so far, I don’t see any of that missing.”

Maryland was picked to finish third, followed by Florida State, Georgia Tech, North Carolina, N.C. State, Virginia, Boston College, Wake Forest, Clemson and Virginia Tech.

Johnson, the reigning ACC player of the year after averaging 19.6 points last season, could become the 12th three-time all-ACC first-team selection and first since 2008. She was joined on the preseason all-conference team by teammate Riquna Williams. They were joined by Maryland’s Lynetta Kizer and Alyssa Thomas, and Florida State’s Cierra Bravard.

“I think it kind of shows that anything is possible. I think where we are ... that’s OK,” Bravard said. “It just shows how tough and how competitive it’s going to be this year.”

The preseason projections aren’t only about who’s returning — but who’s not around anymore at the league’s traditional powers.

Duke lost do-it-all-guard Jasmine Thomas, who led the Blue Devils to four straight ACC championship games and victories in the last two. The Tar Heels must replace three mainstays over the past four years — Jessica Breland, Cetera DeGraffenreid and Italee Lucas — with a handful of first-year players.

North Carolina also will be without two key players until at least mid-December — shot-blocking center Waltiea Rolle is pregnant and is due Nov. 3, and guard Tierra Ruffin-Pratt had shoulder surgery in July. Coach Sylvia Hatchell said it’s possible that either or both could be redshirted.

“We have a lot of uncertainties, I guess you could say,” coach Sylvia Hatchell said, adding that “those young kids have just got to have some time. But it’s going to be fun, because ... we’re going to be better than people think we’re going to be, especially as we move along, get people back out there and get experience under our belts.”

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Top 25 High Major Women's College Basketball Assistants

Over the past few seasons, I compiled lists of the top assistant coaches in men's college basketball, most of which have now gone on to lead their own programs as head coaches. On the heels of the success of these lists, I have decided to provide a similar ranking for women's college basketball "High-Major" assistant coaches.

Ranking the quality of a team is never easy. Ranking the quality of a coach is even harder. Ranking an assistant coach is well... almost down right impossible. There are so many factors that go into determining what exactly makes a good assistant coach; work ethic, servants mentality, reliability, attention to detail, recruiting skills, overall basketball knowledge, the list goes on and on. What is most imperative to remember is that even though assistant coaches are integral parts of each program, they are not irreplaceable. A good assistant supports his head coach, and not the other way around.

In compiling this list, several factors were weighed, one of the more significant of which was an assistant's longevity with the program. Those that have served their time and paid their dues with unquestionable loyalty to their head coaches have proven their worth as an assistant and will themselves be rewarded one day with the opportunity to lead a program. Other factors that went into the rankings include; overall program success while on staff, total years as an assistant, head coaching experience, recruiting, reputation amongst peers, and future potential. Many staffs, as you will see, have two long tenured assistants that have worked in tandem and are thus grouped together.

Almost all of those listed will one day be head of their own programs and those that are not will only be so by choice. Most importantly is the realization that this list was created not to classify the haves from the have-nots, but to honor those assistants who have done great work throughout their careers and bring something truly special to a staff.

1. Chris Dailey - Connecticut

In her 26 seasons at UConn, Dailey has helped Geno Auriemma build the Lady Huskie basketball program into a national powerhouse. She has established recruiting nationally and globally while playing an integral role in assisting the school to 7 NCAA Championship victories and 12 Final Fours.

2a. Holly Warlick - Tennessee

Regarded as one of the top assistant coaches in the country, Holly Warlick enters her 26th season under legendary head coach Pat Summitt. The highly successful recruiter for the backcourt won the 2007 WBCA Top Assistant Coach Award and has helped the Lady Volunteers capture 8 NCAA Championship victories and 16 Final Four appearances.

2b. Mickie DeMoss - Tennessee

Long-time Lady Vol assistant DeMoss returned to the Tennessee sideline in 2010 for her second run with the team, where she has helped lead the program to 6 NCAA Championships wins and 12 NCAA Final Fours. She previously served as assistant coach at Texas (2007-2010) and head coach at Kentucky (2003-2007) where she won the 2005-2006 SEC Coach of the Year award after guiding the Lady Wildcats to 22 wins.

3. Al Brown - Duke

With over 32 years of assistant coaching experience on both the men's and women's sides, Brown has brought with him success to every program he has coached at, most notably the women's teams at Tennessee, Michigan State, and now currently Duke. He has been a vital part of 3 NCAA Championships, 4 NCAA runner-up teams, 8 NCAA Final Four squads and 19 NCAA Tournaments over the course of his career.

4. Amy Tucker - Stanford

For nearly three decades, Tucker has established herself as one of the nation's most prolific recruiters and talent evaluators as her recruiting trail has resulted in Stanford's players winning 2 Wade Trophies, 2 Naismith National Player of the Year Awards, and 18 State Farm/Kodak/WBCA first-team All-America selections. The Cardinals have also won 2 NCAA Championships and reached 9 Final Fours during her tenure.

5. Gale Valley - Texas

Since joining the Long Horns in 2007, Valley has helped guide the program to 4 consecutive NCAA Tournament appearances. Prior to serving in her current role at Texas, the guard-coaching specialist spent 18 highly successful seasons at Duke,

which included 2 NCAA Championship appearances and 4 Final Fours.

6. Andrew Calder - North Carolina

As one of the longest tenured assistant coaches in the NCAA, Calder enters his 25th season at UNC where he has been involved in every aspect of the program, specifically overseeing scouting and player development. He has played a pivotal role in guiding the Tar Heels to a NCAA Championship victory and 8 ACC titles in one of the most competitive conferences in the nation.

7. Jan Ross - Oklahoma

Ross begins her 15th season at Oklahoma, where she has been instrumental in the team's strong success. She has helped the Sooners produce 9 20-plus-win seasons and advance to 11 consecutive NCAA Tournaments including the 2002 NCAA Championship game and back-to-back Final Fours in 2009 and 2010.

8a. Leon Barmore - Baylor

Now entering his 4th year at Baylor, Barmore adds a wealth of basketball knowledge and coaching experience to the Baylor sideline, having previously served 20 seasons as head coach at Louisiana Tech where he compiled 576 wins and won the 1988 NCAA Championship title. The coaching legend was inducted into both the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame and the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in 2003.

8b. Bill Brock - Baylor

Brock has earned a solid assistant coaching reputation by developing Baylor's post game into one of the best in the country and helping the program land some of the nation's top recruiting classes. He was instrumental in guiding the Lady Bears to the 2005 NCAA Championship title and appearances in 6 NCAA Tournaments.

9a. Tina Langley - Maryland

Over her first three seasons at Maryland, Tina Langley has played a crucial role in the program's success including helping to lead the team to its first ACC Championship in 20 years. Prior to coaching the Terrapins, she spent 5 years at Toledo where she assisted the program to 3 Mid-American Conference regular season titles and 2 NCAA Tournament appearances.

9b. Marlin Chinn - Maryland

Considered as one of the elite recruiters in the game, Chinn joined Maryland's coaching staff in 2009 after spending four years as Seton Hall's top assistant. He recruited two All-Big East Rookie Team selections and two All-Big East performers for the Pirates. Chinn also spent seven seasons at Mount St. Mary's (1998-2005), recruiting five Northeast Conference All-Rookie Team choices and helping to guide the program to a pair of NEC regular-season titles in 1999 and 2001.

10. Vic Schaefer - Texas A&M

Nicknamed the "Secretary of Defense", Schaefer has molded the Aggie defense into one of the top units in the nation. He has also played a large part in landing eight top 20 recruiting classes at Texas A&M and assisting the squad to their first NCAA Championship title in 2011 and sixth straight NCAA Tournament appearance overall.

11. Jonathon Tsipis - Notre Dame

A recipient of the 2008-09 BasketballScoop.com Coach of the Year award, Tsipis is nationally recognized for his player development and scouting. In his first seven seasons with the Irish, he has helped lead the program to a 162-64 record, 3 NCAA Sweet 16 berths, and one NCAA Championship appearance.

12. Kelly Bond - Texas A&M

Bond is a veteran coach whose key recruiting contributions have formed one of the top guard cores in women's college basketball. Over her last 11 seasons of coaching, she has been a part of 9 NCAA Tournament appearances with Arkansas and Texas A&M including the 2008 Elite Eight, 2009 Sweet 16, and a victory in the 2010-11 NCAA Championship game.

13. Jack Easley - Iowa State

In 9 seasons at ISU, Easley has helped guide the Cyclones to a 180-85 record and 8 postseason appearances, including a trip to the NCAA Elite Eight in 2009 and the Sweet 16 in 2010. He previously spent 19 seasons as an assistant at Oklahoma State where the Cowgirls compiled a 350-244 record and 7 NCAA Tournament berths.

14. Stephanie Norman - Louisville

Norman has brought tremendous success to Louisville since arriving from Vanderbilt, as the Cardinals were the 2009 NCAA Championship runner-ups, in only her second season with the program. During her tenure at Vanderbilt, the Commodores made five straight appearances to the NCAA Tournament, including two Sweet 16 berths.

15. Carol Owens - Notre Dame

Regarded as one of the nation's premier post coaches, Owens has played a vital role in all three of Notre Dame's Final Four appearances. In addition, she has attracted 14 consecutive top 20 recruiting classes, between her stints at Notre Dame and her five years as head coach at Northern Illinois.

16. Jodi Steyer - Iowa State

Steyer has been a key component behind the Cyclones' 7 postseason bids in the last eight seasons, and has turned ISU into one of the nation's most prolific three-point shooting teams. She also previously coached five all-conference players and two Mid-American Conference players of the year during her six-year tenure at Toledo.

17. Lance White - Florida State

White has brought a dominant defensive mindset to FSU, as the Lady Seminoles have experienced two of its greatest defensive seasons under his tutelage. White arrived from Texas Tech where he spent 10 seasons and won 3 Big XII championships, advancing to 7-straight NCAA Tournaments, including 5 Sweet Sixteen and 2 Elite Eight appearances.

18. Dan Durkin - Temple

Durkin is formerly the winningest head women's basketball coach at Duquesne University, where he was awarded the 1998 A-10 Coach of the Year and produced two WNBA draft picks. He also spent eight seasons at Penn State, assisting the Lady Lions to 181 wins, 7 NCAA Tournament berths, and 2 Sweet 16 appearances.

19. Candis Blankson - DePaul

A true product of the DePaul program, Blankson has been an assistant on the Blue Devil staff since completing her collegiate playing career in 2001. She has helped guide the program to 220 wins and 8 straight NCAA tournament berths including the school's first Sweet 16 in 2007. She has also worked with 26 all-conference performers, including two Freshman of the Year and a pair of Sixth Players of the Year.

20. Stacie Terry - Louisiana State

With over ten years of assistant coaching experience at the Division I level, Terry enters her first season at LSU having formerly served as an assistant at UCLA. In her three seasons with the Bruins, the school won 72 games and clinched 2 NCAA Tournament berths. She has also helped produce 13 players who have moved on to play professionally either in the WNBA or overseas.

21. Shannon Perry - UCLA

The former leading defender at Iowa, Perry has become widely known as an excellent recruiter, having helped recruit two top 5 recruiting classes in her 5 years at Duke (2004-09). Additionally, Perry coached in the NCAA Tournament during each season at Duke, including the 2006 NCAA Championship game. She also assisted the development of five All-Americans during her tenure with the Lady Blue Devils.

21. Ed Baldwin - Ohio State

Baldwin adds two decades of college coaching experience to the Ohio State sideline, including 13 years as the most winning head coach at UNC-Charlotte from 1988-2000. Entering his fourth season as an assistant with the Lady Buckeyes, he has helped guide the school to a program record 31 wins in 2009-10, and 2 Sweet 16 appearances in three seasons.

23. Kamie Ethridge - Kansas State

Regarded as one of the greatest women's basketball guards to ever play the game, Ethridge enters her 16th season at Kansas State, where she has built the program's perimeter game into one of the best in the nation. In addition to leading the program to 9 postseason appearances in the last 12 years including the 2006 WNIT Championship title, she has helped develop four future WNBA players.

24. Danielle O'Banion - Memphis

In her first two seasons at Memphis, O'Banion helped recruit the core of the team that would put together back-to-back 20-win seasons, including a trip to the 2010 Women's Basketball Invitational finals. Previously, O'Banion served as an assistant coach at the University of Minnesota, helping the Gophers to 4 NCAA Tournament appearances, including two trips to the Sweet 16 and the 2004 Final 4.

25. Carla D. Morrow - Xavier

In her first four seasons at Xavier, Morrow has helped lead the Musketeers to a 108-23 overall record and a 52-4 mark in Atlantic 10 play. She has also assisted the school to six Atlantic 10 Championships and NCAA Tournament berths in each of the last four seasons, including a trip to the Elite Eight in 2010.

Honorable Mention: Martin Clapp – Purdue, Kyra Elzy – Kentucky, Angie Johnson – Florida State, Travis Mays – Georgia, Latoja Schaben – Iowa State

Tallahassee.com

Bravard brings star appeal to 'Noles lineup

By [Ira Schoffel](#)

Democrat sports editor

The comment was brief and understated, but oh so significant.

While watching senior center Cierra Bravard run through some drills during preseason workouts, first-year Florida State assistant Brooke Wyckoff leaned over and whispered in the direction of head coach Sue Semrau.

"She is going to be a wanted woman in the WNBA," Wyckoff said.

Wyckoff should know what she's talking about. After an All-America career at FSU, Wyckoff played nine seasons in the WNBA before pursuing a career in coaching.

Now, she is getting to work with a player who is following in her very accomplished footsteps.

Not only did Bravard take a similar path to get to FSU — like Wyckoff, she was a high school star in Ohio before joining the Seminoles — but she also appears to be on the verge of national acclaim.

After earning first-team All-ACC honors as a junior, Bravard now has been named a first-team preseason All-American by the

Sporting News. She is one of 10 players on the list.

That comes on the heels of her being named one of 25 players on the preseason watch list for the Wade Trophy, which goes to the nation's top player.

"That's a really high honor," Semrau said. "I don't know that I've had a player be on that this early."

Bravard, a 6-foot-4 center who led FSU with 15.0 points and 7.8 rebounds per game last season, said she appreciates the accolades but hasn't spent much time thinking about them.

"It's a great honor," Bravard said. "But at the same time, if I don't perform, if I'm not in the gym doing what I'm supposed to be doing, it's not really going to be a factor. So it's not really something that I'm really worried about right now.

"If I do what I'm supposed to do, what everybody knows I can do and what I'm

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capable of, I think I'll be good."

Semrau and her staff have no doubts about that. When FSU tipped off preseason practice this past Sunday, Semrau didn't hide the fact that Bravard will be the focal point of their 2011-12 season.

"She's worked extremely hard this summer, and she will be at the center of what we do," Semrau said. "Honestly, she's a year better already. We're excited about being able to anchor our team around her.

"She is so unique in having her size, her strength. But her intelligence about how to get the ball, what angles to have, (and) she's a great finisher. I think she's gonna be extremely special, like none I've ever had."

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October 1, 2011

FSU men, women gun for more in 2011-12

By Ira Schoffel
Democrat sports editor

The vast majority of the nation's college basketball programs would be envious of the success the Florida State men's and women's teams enjoyed last season.

The women made it to the second round of the NCAA tournament, while the men reached the Sweet 16.

But as both teams prepare to open preseason practice for the 2011-12 season — the women start drills on Sunday while the men will have to wait until mid-October — the theme at the Basketball Training Center appears to be "unfinished business."

"I think some of the players have a little bit of a chip on their shoulder and are really getting ready to get after it here as we start on Sunday," FSU women's coach Sue Semrau said.

The women's team, which was upset by Georgia in the second round of the tournament, has plenty of firepower returning. Starting with senior center Cierra Bravard and junior guard Alexa Deluzio, the Seminoles bring back five of their top seven scorers from a year ago.

Bravard averaged 15.0 points and 7.8 rebounds last season and is one of 25 players on the preseason watch list for the Wade Trophy, which is considered the Heisman Trophy of women's basketball. And Bravard said she and her teammates are determined to go much further than they did this past season.

"We didn't do half of what we were trying to accomplish last year," Bravard said. "I think that's just kind of a motivation."

The women's team will have to replace two departed seniors — guards Christian Hunnicutt and Courtney Ward — and Semrau said sorting that out will be one of the primary issues this preseason.

The FSU men's team also will be looking to replace a pair of big-time veterans — point guard Derwin Kitchen graduated, and forward Chris Singleton left early for the NBA Draft. Singleton was a first-round selection of the Washington Wizards.

Despite those departures, the Seminoles bring back a wealth of talent and experience, including nine of their top 11 scorers.

"With the number of veterans we have returning, hopefully that will allow us to draw some wisdom from the experiences we've had in the past," men's coach Leonard Hamilton said. "Hopefully we'll have a clear understanding of all the little things that make a difference of whether or not you win or lose. Hopefully that will motivate us to really stay focused for the whole year."
