

# Florida State University Softball

**May 26, 2002 -- Versus Arizona -- Game Twelve -- 2002 College World Series  
Oklahoma City, OK -- Don Porter ASA Hall Of Fame Stadium**

## GAMEDAY NOTES

### *Setting The Stage For FSU/Arizona*

A look at the series: Heading into the semifinal game against Arizona at the 2002 Women's College World Series, Florida State has gone winless in seven tries against the Wildcats. The last meeting between these two teams dates back to 1996 when Florida State hosted the NCAA Regional. The Wildcats advanced to the College World Series that year defeating the Seminoles 10-3. This will be the third time these two teams have met in the post season with Arizona holding a 3-0 edge over the Tribe. Two of those three Wildcat wins eliminated the Seminoles from the NCAA Regional. Arizona defeated Florida State in 1995 and then twice in 1996. This is the first ever meeting between the two schools in the College World Series.

Arizona marks the second team, in the 2002 Women's College World Series, that Florida State has never beaten in school history. The Seminoles opening round opponent, the UCLA Bruins, had owned the Seminoles in eight previous meetings before the Tribe came through with an opening round victory in the 2002 WCWS. FSU will not only need one, but two wins over Arizona to advance to their first ever College World Series Championship.

Arizona's Jennie Finch entered the 2002 WCWS with a record of 31 wins and 5 losses. Of her five losses, only one came from a non Pac-10 opponent. That loss came in the NCAA Regional when the DePaul Blue Demons touched Finch for five runs, four of which were earned, on five hits in five innings of work. Florida State faced DePaul back on March 15 at the Kia Klassic and defeated the Blue Demons 11-5. Leslie Malerich pitched a complete game victory, while striking out three batters.

In the 2002 College World Series, Arizona's Jennie Finch has been nearly flawless in her two appearances. She has gone 15 innings allowing no runs on only four hits, while striking out 18 batters. Finch has held the opposing team to a .083 batting average in those two games.

In the five losses that Jennie Finch has suffered in 2002, four of those losses have come against teams that Florida State has beaten. Finch was defeated by UCLA twice, Washington, and DePaul. Florida State defeated DePaul 11-5 at the prestigious Kia Klassic, then followed that with a victory over Washington in the same tournament. The Tribe defeated the Huskies 3-2 behind a solid pitching performance by Leslie Malerich. Malerich pitched a complete game allowing no earned runs on six hits, while striking out nine batters. FSU went 1-1 against Washington in 2002. Then the No. 8 seeded Seminoles came into the College World Series and knocked No. 1 seeded UCLA from its throne with a 2-1 ninth inning victory, thanks to Monique Marier's two out, solo home run that sailed over the left field fence.

First and third. You may not think so, but Wildcats and Seminoles are alike in some ways. Arizona and Florida State have scored the most runs against their opponents in the first and third innings. The Seminoles have outscored their opponents 70-9 in the third inning and 54-23 in the first. The key for the Seminoles is to keep the Wildcats in check in the first inning. Arizona has struck early and often against their opponents in the first putting up 81 runs, while holding their competition to 23. They too have also outscored the other team in the third by a combined total of 79-9.

This is the 15<sup>th</sup> consecutive appearance for Arizona in the College World Series, while Florida State is making only their 6<sup>th</sup> appearance and first since 1993. Over that 15-year span, the Wildcats have amassed a 43-17 record, winning six national championships, while appearing in nine title games. Florida State has accumulated a 5-11 record in six years and will look to make their first WCWS championship appearance.

Against the PAC-10: Through the years, teams from the Pac-10 have not been very kind to Florida State in tournament action. In regional play, the Seminoles have gone 1-7 with their lone win coming last year against the California Golden Bears. In the College World Series, the Tribe had gone winless until they defeated UCLA this year, 2-1 in 9 innings.

Today's game featuring Florida State and Arizona showcases two of the winningest all-time coaches (by victories) in this years College World Series. With her 55 victories so far in 2002, Seminole Head Coach Dr. JoAnne Graf has accumulated 949 career NCAA victories. She is followed closely behind by Arizona Head Coach Mike Candrea, who has added 54 wins this year to run his total to 925 for his career. Today's game should be a great match-up between two of the games greatest masterminds to have ever coached the game.

### *You Guys Are Still Here?*

When you look at this year's Women's College World Series, all the nation's power conferences were represented. You had four teams from the mighty Pac-10, two-teams from the Big 12 and a perennial Big 10 power. Then you have Florida State from the five-team Atlantic Coast Conference. The ACC has never been viewed as a major player in softball circles but it is one of just two conferences that are still playing softball as the season enters its final two days. In fact, FSU is the only team in the final four that isn't from the Pac-10. Considering the company they are keeping this week in Oklahoma City, it is safe to say that Florida State is representing the ACC well.

### *Trifecta*

The story of how Florida State made it to the WCWS is well known by now. Everyone has heard that the Seminoles won three games in one day to punch their ticket to Oklahoma City. The question is can they do it again. If you take in to account that the Seminoles didn't actually oust Nebraska until after 12:00 a.m., that game didn't technically finish until Sunday. Now they will have to defeat the defending National Champions twice in a row to advance to the Championship. That would make three wins in one day. FSU has already proven they can do it once this year and they did it in 2000 at the ACC Championships to clinch the conference title so why now try for the trifecta again.

### *Hey, Those Are Our Bats*

One can hardly expect any team in the 2002 WCWS to be hitting .300 against a field that includes the nation's top collegiate pitchers but you can bet the Seminole coaches weren't thrilled about the team's .111 batting average coming into the Nebraska game. The Seminoles did hit the ball extremely hard against second team All-American Jocelyn Forest in a 1-0 loss but the Cal defense seemed to be playing the Tribe perfectly on every occasion. Last night against a Nebraska team that had held the Seminoles to two runs or less in five games dating back to 1995, the Garnet and Gold seemed to find their swing. Florida State doubled its WCWS batting average against Nebraska by hitting 111 points higher in that game than they did in their previous two World Series games (.222 compared to .111). Five Seminoles recorded at least one hit versus the Huskers compared to just one getting a hit versus Cal and only three collecting a base knock against No. 1 UCLA and Keira Gorel. The Tribe tripled its RBI total with three Saturday night compared to just one in their first two contests and had twice as many extra base hits as Brandi Stuart and Jessica van der Linden each recorded doubles. Florida State also scored twice as many runs with four last night than they had against UCLA and Cal when they totaled two in 16 innings. They also equaled their hit total from the week with six against the Cornhuskers.

## ***Lucky 14***

Jessica van der is going to be the most prolific double hitter in the 24-year history of Florida State softball and there is no arguing that. The sophomore equaled her double total from last year with her two-base RBI against Nebraska last night. Her 14 doubles are the second-most in a single season in FSU history as she tied her own mark, which she set last season. In just two seasons, the Cerritos, CA native has amassed 28 doubles and is in third place all alone on the career list for that category. At her current pace, she will end her FSU career with 56 doubles, which would shatter the previous career record of 38 set by Wendy Bray from 1994-1997.

## ***That's A Whole Lotta Wins***

Nobody in America who is still playing softball at this point in the season has as many wins as FSU's 55 victories. The Seminoles have more wins than Cal (54), Arizona (54) and ASU (46) heading into the semi-finals of the 2002 WCWS. Today's match-up between the Wildcats and Seminoles will feature the two teams with the most wins remaining in the WCWS as the squads have combined for 109 victories in 2002. When the Tribe secured win No. 55 against Nebraska Saturday, it marked the sixth time in program history that a Seminole team has amassed 55 or more wins. With just one more victory, the 2002 Seminoles will move into a tie for fifth for the most wins in a single season in team history.

## ***She's A Double Machine***

Brandi Stuart hit her first double of the WCWS and continues her hot bat at the plate in the series. In the three games this tournament, the Seminoles have collected 12 hits with Stuart owning four of them. Her double was only the third extra base hit for Florida State in the series. Stuart's two-bagger in the second was her 27<sup>th</sup> of her career, moving her into a tie for fourth all-time with Lisa Davidson.

## ***Strong In The Third***

Nebraska's run in the third inning is only the ninth run allowed by Florida State all year in the third. For the season, the Seminoles have outscored their opponents 70-9 in the third inning.

## ***Carter Connection***

In the fifth inning with the bases covered in garnet and gold, Kimmy Carter came through yet again for the Seminoles, taking a 1-1 offering through the gap between third and short off Cornhusker relieve pitcher Leigh Ann Walker. This is the second time in the post season that Carter has stepped up to the plate with the base loaded and connected for the Seminoles. In the NCAA regional, Carter tripled with the bases loaded knocking in three RBIs and helping FSU to a 6-1 victory over Georgia Tech.

## ***Finally Figured Her Out***

Coming into tonight's game against the Cornhuskers, the Seminoles had only managed to get two hits off Nebraska pitcher Leigh Ann Walker when she faced FSU back in 2001 at the Seminole Softball Complex in Tallahassee, Fla. In the fifth inning, the Seminoles equaled that total when Kimmy Carter and Jessica van der Linden singled and doubled to left, respectively.

## ***Heart Of A Champion***

Leslie Malerich has been amazing in the 2002 Women's College World Series. The senior is proving why she was an All-American last season with her effort inside the circle in Oklahoma City. In seven days dating back to the final day of action at the 2002 NCAA Tallahassee Regional, Malerich has thrown 704 pitches. That equates to her pitching a complete game every day for seven straight days. She has pitched 55 innings over that stretch and posted a 6-1 record. She has now pitched 310.1 innings this year and is second on FSU's All-Time list for innings pitched in a season. She also holds down the top spot when she was on the mound for 323 innings as a sophomore in 2000.

## ***Have You Guys Ever Got This Far?***

With Florida State's 4-3 win over Nebraska late Saturday night, or early Sunday morning, FSU moved into the final four of the 2002 Women's College World Series for just the second time in the history of the program. The last time the Seminoles made it as far was 1990 when they got wins over Fresno State and UNLV before being eliminated in the semifinals by mighty UCLA. With a win over the Wildcats today, the Seminoles will set a new program record for the most wins ever by an FSU squad at the WCWS.

## ***One Of Just Two***

With a Florida State's victory over Nebraska, Leslie Malerich became only the second Seminole pitcher to collect two victories in the College World Series. Debbie DeJohn was the first Seminole to perform such a feat when she defeated Fresno State and UNLV back in 1990. That year the Seminoles went 2-2 in the WCWS, they're best showing ever in a College World Series before this season. In 2002, Malerich defeated No. 1 UCLA and No. 7 Nebraska.

## ***The Triple Crown***

When the Seminole softball team traveled to Fullerton, CA for the prestigious Kia Klassic, it marked the only time in 2002 that they had defeated three ranked teams in one week. In fact, FSU downed then-sixth ranked Oklahoma, 13<sup>th</sup>-ranked Wahington and 14<sup>th</sup>-ranked DePaul in a span of just three days. The Seminoles will try to repeat that feat today against No. 2 Arizona having already downed No. 1 UCLA and No. 7 Nebraska. Florida State now has four wins over teams ranked in the top 10 of the final NFCA/USAToday Top 25 poll (No. 1 UCLA, No. 6 Washington, No. 7 Nebraska and No. 10 Texas).

## ***Walker: FSU Ranger***

Senior Jackie Hirschfeld has been invaluable as a pinch hitter for FSU in 2002. The Tampa, FL senior came into Saturday night's game with a .300 batting average as a pinch hitter. More impressively, in 34 plate appearances, Hirschfeld has got on base 20 times. She had six hits, 12 walks and was hit by a pitch on two occasions. Her on base percentage of .588 is clearly the best on the team but when she came up in the fifth inning against Nebraska Saturday night, she was looking to do more than draw a walk. With FSU down 1-0 and facing the possibility of having just eight outs remaining in their season, the senior third baseman was called on to pinch hit again and try to capitalize on Beth Wade's single in the previous at bat. Hirschfeld worked the count to 3-1 and looked like she was headed for walk number 13 on the season before NU hurler Peaches James got her looking at a strike to send it to a full count. Hirschfeld sent the next pitch she saw through the left side of the infield for her seventh hit of the year and sparked a four-run Seminole rally that sent FSU to the semifinals.