

# Florida State University Softball

**May 25, 2002 -- Versus Nebraska -- Game Ten -- 2002 College World Series  
Oklahoma City, OK -- Don Porter ASA Hall Of Fame Stadium**

## GAMEDAY NOTES

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

Nebraska leads the all-time series versus Florida State with an 8-3 record. The last time these two teams met was last year when the Cornhuskers defeated the Seminoles 3-0 in Tallahassee, Fla. The last victory for Florida State came in 1997 when the Seminoles won 2-1 in nine innings. Nebraska has won the last three meetings against the Tribe. In the all-time series, Nebraska has outscored Florida State 31 to 14.

Nebraska and Florida State have faced each other twice in the post season when they squared off in the West Regional out in Tucson, Arizona back in 1995. Both teams split a pair from each other. Nebraska won the first game 6-1, but then the Seminoles got their revenge in beating the Cornhuskers 6-2 in the second game and eliminating them from the NCAA Regional.

In the College World Series, Florida State is 0-2 against the Big 12. Both losses came against Oklahoma State in 1990 and 1993 losing 4-1 and 5-2, respectively. The Seminoles will look to earn their first victory against a Big 12 representative when they face Nebraska in an elimination game at the 2002 Women's College World Series.

In 2001, Florida State faced Nebraska in Tallahassee, Fla. The Cornhuskers defeated the Seminoles 3-0, behind a solid pitching performance by Senior Leigh Ann Walker. Walker held the Seminoles to only two hits in a complete game shut out striking out nine batters. At the plate, Nebraska was led by Kim Ogee, who went 1-for-3 with a double, two RBI, and a run scored. Leigh Suhr and Cindy Roethemeyer each had a single and a stolen base, while Amber Burgess collected a hit and drove in the other run for the Cornhuskers. The Seminoles were led in the circle by Leslie Malerich who got the loss in hurling a complete game six hitter, while striking out seven Huskers. At the plate, Elisa Vasques collected one of the two hits off Walker. Vasques had a pinch hit double for the Seminoles in the loss.

In her career, Leslie Malerich has gone 0-2 against the Nebraska Cornhuskers. Her first loss came as a freshman back in 1999. The Cornhuskers got four runs off Malerich to beat the Seminoles 4-1. The second loss came in 2001, when Nebraska defeated FSU 3-0.

Although the Seminoles did not face Nebraska in 2002, they fared pretty well against other schools in the Big 12 winning 4 of 7 games. First, they defeated Kansas and nationally ranked Texas at the Sunshine Classic in Tallahassee back in March. Next, they went on to defeat Iowa State 7-0 and then nipped 2002 WCWS participant Oklahoma 1-0 at the Kia Klassic.

### *Fighting Thru The Losers Bracket*

Although nobody likes to play extra games to advance through the loser's bracket, Florida State has done it before. Most recently, the Seminoles got to the College World Series the hard way after losing to Georgia Tech in a second round game at the 2002 NCAA Tallahassee Regional. Florida State had to win three games to get to Oklahoma City, OK. After rain washed away all of Saturday's games, FSU had to do it all in one day. The Tribe won all three, including two extra inning games and a sweep of Georgia Tech, to get back to their sixth WCWS.

### *Gotta Be Strong In The Low Post*

Despite the loss to Cal in a winner's bracket game Friday, senior hurler Leslie Malerich continues to be a dominant force in the NCAA Tournament and her ERA in the postseason is remarkably low. Malerich's loss to the Golden Bears was her first in NCAA play this year but she still has a sparkling ERA of 0.73 in seven Regional and College World Series games. She has pitched 48 of FSU's 53 innings and allowed just five earned runs.

### *Bringing It With Runners On*

Malerich has had a wonderful postseason and despite giving up 45 hits in 48 innings, there is a good reason she is 5-1 with a miniscule 0.73 ERA. The Merrillville, IN native really bears down when runners get on base against her. Teams are hitting just .191 with runners on base versus the senior hurler. That is 22 points lower than her season average when teams hit .213 against her with runners on.

### *300 Club*

With her seven innings of work against Cal Friday, Malerich has now pitched 303.1 innings in 2002. This is the second time in her illustrious career that the Merrillville, IN native has surpassed 300 innings in one season. As a sophomore in 2000, she became just the second player in Florida State history to throw 300 or more innings pitching 323. She is the first pitcher in Seminole history to ever pitch over 300 innings twice in a career. Kristy Fuentes is the only other Florida State pitcher to accomplish this feat and she did it in 1997 when she threw 310 innings.

### *Just One More Would Do It*

Malerich is having a career year in many aspects despite playing against the best teams on the Florida State schedule all year. After pitching FSU past UCLA and holding the nation's No. 1 hitting team and fifth-best scoring team to just one run, she is just two wins away from establishing a new career high. She currently has 34 wins this year and is one away from equaling her single-season career best of 35 set in 2000 as a sophomore.

### *Struggling To Score*

If you want a reason why Florida State has been struggling to score runs in the Regional and World Series you could easily attribute it to facing better pitchers but there is another glaring stat also. During the 2002 regular season, FSU hit .469 when they had a runner on third base and there were less than two outs in an inning. In this year's postseason, the Seminoles are 0-for-6 in similar situations. On the other hand, the Garnet and Gold does have nine two-out RBIs in seven postseason games this year.

<b>2001</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1988</b>
Neb 3 FSU 0	FSU 2 Neb 1	FSU 2 Neb 1	Neb 5 FSU 0 Neb 3 FSU 0
<b>1999</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1989</b>	
Neb 4 FSU 1	Neb 6 FSU 1*	Neb 4 FSU 2	
Neb 1 FSU 0	FSU 6 Neb 2*	Neb 1 FSU 0	

\*Postseason meeting

## What Happened Yesterday?

Oklahoma City, OK – For the eighth time in nine tries, the Cal Golden Bears got the best of the 21<sup>st</sup>-ranked Seminoles (54-19), this time it was in the second round of the 2002 Women's College World Series. The Bears (54-19) only run of the day came off a solo blast from a batter that was called out just two pitches earlier by the third base umpire before given new life when the ump behind the plate reversed the call. The home run just two pitches later by Chelsea Spencer turned out to be the lone run of the game.

"That was really tough," said third baseman Becky Brock. "One second you have retired a tough batter and you are one out closer to getting out of the inning and two seconds later she hits the game-winning home run. I thought it was a fair ball that we threw her out on but I wasn't sure. It was just heart-breaking."

Yesterday's hero on the mound for FSU, Leslie Malerich (34-13) was dominate again Friday as she scattered five hits over seven innings and recorded two strikeouts. For the 12<sup>th</sup> time in her last 12 appearances, FSU failed to score more than three runs for her as the team was shutout for just the seventh time all season.

"I felt pretty good but I still feel pretty shot from pitching three games Sunday," said Malerich. "I thought I did pretty well except for the one pitch. I probably left it up a little more than I would have liked but it wasn't straight down the middle or anything. That was the only pitch that hurt me. I always seem to get a little tired in the middle innings and that was no different today."

"My whole team and coaching staff is behind me because they know we haven't really been hitting that well lately so the pressure is on me to be perfect. They keep telling me how great of a job I am doing. I don't think I did good enough though. I take a lot of the blame because it was my pitch that went over the fence."

Florida State came up to get its first look at Cal ace Jocelyn Forest (26-12) and the right-hander lived up to her reputation setting the Tribe down in order in the bottom of the inning. Cal looked to get something going in the second as Malerich pitched around power-hitter Veronica Nelson and issuing the first walk of the game. After Cal replaced her with a pinch runner, which they can only do once per game, the senior hurler and the FSU defense closed out the inning in dominant fashion. Malerich retired the second batter of the inning on a ground ball up the middle as she cut down the lead runner. First baseman Beth Wade took care of the rest as the redshirt-sophomore snagged a liner headed down the right field line and stepped on the bag for the double play.

Cal jumped out to the lead in the fifth when shortstop Chelsea Spencer led-off the inning with a deep shot over the left field fence. The homer almost never came to pass as Spencer seemed to be thrown out on a great defensive play by Becky Brock two pitches earlier. The home plate umpire called the ball foul after Spencer was already heading to the dugout when the umpire gave her new life and she took advantage of it. The home run was just the second allowed in 60 innings of postseason play by Malerich and the last home run she allowed was in the Regional Championship when FSU defeated Georgia Tech 6-1 to earn a ticket to the Women's College World Series.

Florida State, down to its last six outs, sent pinch hitter Elisa Velasco to the plate to start things off in the sixth. The sophomore laced the first pitch she saw into the corner into left field but Cal had her played perfectly as leftfielder Bayless snared the shot retiring Velasco. After Forest got Colzie on a line out to third, Carter hit another Forest offering very hard to center but the Golden Bears were in perfect position again to make the out and end the frame.

Malerich set the Bears down one, two, three in the top of the seventh bringing up the heart of the FSU order in the bottom of the frame with just the Tribe down to its last three outs. Van der Linden started things off with a ground out to first that she nearly beat out on a head first slide. That brought up Stuart who had FSU's only hit on the day in the fourth. The junior from Cerritos, CA blasted a shot to short that Spencer was unable to handle for her second hit of the day and just the team's second hit off of Forest. The Bears got George swinging bringing up Marier with the chance to win her second straight game for the Seminoles but Forest was just too much for FSU to handle as she got Marier to ground out ending the game.

"I just saw the ball today and tried to hit it well," said Stuart. "I knew from seeing her (Jocelyn Forest) last year that I was going to have to be very disciplined today and have a lot of patience. Jocelyn (Forest) is a great pitcher and I am not going to take that away from her. Do I think she is beatable? Yes. We just have to be more patient the next time around."

## First Team For A Reason

Cerritos, CA native Brandi Stuart is in the midst of a monster season that has culminated in a trip to the Women's College World Series and her selection as a first team All-American. She is showing that her selection was no fluke with her play at the WCWS. Stuart is leading Florida State in average (.429), hits (3), runs (1), slugging percentage (.429) and stolen bases (1). She is hitting 20 percentage points higher against the country's best pitchers in Oklahoma City than she did in the regular season and ACC Tournament when she was batting .409. In the NCAA Regionals and WCWS, Stuart once again leads FSU in average (.333), runs (3), hits (6), doubles (1), slugging percentage (.389), walks (6), on base percentage (.500) and steals (2). Teams have also been pitching around Stuart as she has drawn four intentional walks and six walks overall. The only time she got a pitch to hit with runners in scoring position, she laced an RBI double into the left field corner against Georgia Tech in a must-win situation on the final day of Regional play. She has also hit .500 when she has come up to the plate with two outs on the board.

## Be Back AT 4

Stuart has spent most of the 2002 season with a lofty batting average over .400. Since teams have been pitching around her lately, when the junior has had a chance to hit it has been hard for her to get into rhythm. That all changed against second team All-American Jocelyn Forest in Friday's game. Stuart collected both of FSU's hits and sent her average back above the .400 mark. She is currently hitting .402, which is tied for the second-highest batting average in the 24-year history of Florida State softball. This will be the second consecutive season she has lead the team in batting average and she is only the fourth FSU player to ever lead the Tribe in batting average in back-to-back seasons.

## Well Rounded

There is no doubt about what type of athlete Stuart is on the field but she is as much of an All-American off the field and in the classroom. The junior is a two-year member of the Florida State Student Athlete Advisory Council (SAAC) and served as SAAC president this year. She is a member of the ACC SAAC and has also been nominated to become a member of the National SAAC. She has been named a District III Verizon All-American for the second consecutive year in 2002 and she is a two-time member of the Dean's List.

## A Nice Addition

Junior college transfer Shundra Colzie may be quiet off the field but she has been making noise on the diamond all season long. One of just three Seminoles to hit over .300 this year, Shundra is just behind first-team All-American Brandi Stuart and second on the team in the 2002 postseason with a .286 average and two runs. Shundra is tied for first with six hits, second in walks (3) and second with an .375 on base percentage. She is also fielding 1.000 and leading the team with a .333 average with runners on base in the Regionals and WCWS.

## The Bases Are Covered In Seminoles

Despite some struggles at the plate against very good pitching in the 2002 postseason, if the Seminoles are able to load the bases, they have a good chance of cashing in. Florida State is hitting .400 in five bases loaded opportunities in the postseason. Both big hits came in the Regional Championship as FSU downed Georgia Tech 6-1. Jessica van der Linden hit a bases loaded double in the second, which scored two runs. Kimmy Carter then tripled, clearing the bases, knocking in three RBIs and extending FSU to a 6-1 lead.

## Gotta Believe Its Getting Better

Considering how awesome Stuart has been in 2002, it is almost scary to think how good she will be as a senior in 2003. The second baseman has raised her offensive numbers by a substantial margin almost every year she has been in Tallahassee. One look at her numbers from freshman to sophomore to junior year is a testament to how hard the team captain works every off-season.

	Batting Avg	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SLG	SB
2000	.339	39	79	6	6	2	36	.442	42
2001	.361	49	73	12	2	5	36	.515	30
2002	.402	63	80	8	7	10	45	.518	54