

3-10-2005

The Beacon, March 10, 2005

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FIU loses in Sun Belt semifinals

By **ANDONI GONZALEZ-RUA**
Staff Writer

Coach Sergio Rouco said all season that the only part that mattered was the conference tournament.

It seems as though his team was listening.

The Golden Panthers upset No.4 seed South Alabama, 60-57, on March 4 in Denton, Texas to advance to the Sun Belt Conference quarter finals. FIU defeated Arkansas-Little Rock 69-64, advancing Rouco's team in the semifinals where the team fell short to last seasons champion, Louisiana-Lafayette, 80-69.

With the win in the first round against South Alabama and the quarterfinals victory against UALR, FIU surpassed the 1999 Golden Panther team; the only previous team to win a game in the conference playoffs.

In 1999, the team advanced to the semifinals with just one win, as the conference consisted of only eight teams.

No one expected the success of FIU in the tournament, something Rouco acknowledged.

"I think we have gained some respect from around the league," said Rouco.

Here is a game-by-game recap of the Sun Belt tournament, starting with the first game.

FIU 60 SOUTH ALABAMA 57

The Golden Panthers were led by all-conference first team selection Ivan Almonte who notched another double-double, something that has become normal this season at FIU, with 19 points and 14 rebounds.

The junior from the Dominican

Republic shot 6-11 from the field and 7-of-8 from the free throw line, a place where he had struggled all season.

"That guy's a man," said South Ala-

bama coach John Pelphrey of Almonte. "[He's] a ferocious competitor. He dominates a game a lot like Bo McCalebb [of New Orleans] does, except Almonte's a

power forward. He physically whips you with his strength."

Almonte was the only Golden Panther in double figures. Freshmen Kenny Simms and junior Ismael N'Diaye both added nine points, with another eight a piece coming from seniors Junior Matias and Byron Burnett.

"We lost seven straight in January. It was a tough month," said Almonte following the upset. "But we started winning some games and built our confidence. We play hard every game, no matter what the score is."

Rouco's men held South Alabama to just 30 percent, shooting in front of 517 on lookers on the campus of North Texas University.

The Golden Panthers, playing in road jerseys, held South Alabama's leading scorers Mario Jointer to just eight points on 1-of-8 shooting.

FIU trailed for only 64 seconds all night in route to their second victory over South Alabama this season. It was the second time FIU had beaten USA in less than a month, having won 74-71 at the Pharmed Arena on Feb. 19.

FIU 69 ARKANSAS-LITTLE ROCK 64

FIU continued its winning ways on March 5 against the number one team in its bracket and regular season Sun Belt east champions, Arkansas-Little Rock, 69-64.

Arkansas-Little Rock had beaten the Golden Panthers earlier in the season at home, 67-57, on Jan. 6 to open the conference schedule. The neutral court in Denton, the home of North Texas,

See **SUNBELT**, page 3

Team finishes season strong

COMMENTARY

By **HARRY COLEMAN**
Sports Editor

No one expected the Golden Panthers to reach the Sun Belt Conference semifinals. Back in late November, I wrote a story on how Head coach Sergio Rouco would turn the 5-22 squad he inherited into an elite Sun Belt Conference team in years to come.

Everyone thought this was ludicrous because there was no immediate cure for such a terrible team.

While I didn't think the team would be successful this soon, I knew that the band of players Rouco recruited would soon develop a team chemistry that would lead them to victories.

Rouco only kept three players from Donnie Marsh's team - Junior Matias, Warren Gale and Raphael daSilva, who Rouco later let go.

After missing all but six games last season, Matias came back as a fifth year senior with a different mentality. He quickly emerged as a team leader and demonstrated leadership to young players like Kenny Simms and Cesar Chavez-Jacobo.

Rouco's energy was felt from the time he took the court as head coach. In the first game of the season, Rouco took off his blazer jacket within the first five minutes of the game, as he always coaches with high intensity.

Never during the season did this team give up, even when only eight players were dressed and available to play in games.

Rouco parted ways with players who did not want to play as a team and who were not ready to take on the role he felt suited the team best.

Junior transfer Ivan Almonte quickly became the team's go to guy and leading scorer. Game in and game out he played like a warrior, never showing signs of a letdown or fatigue.

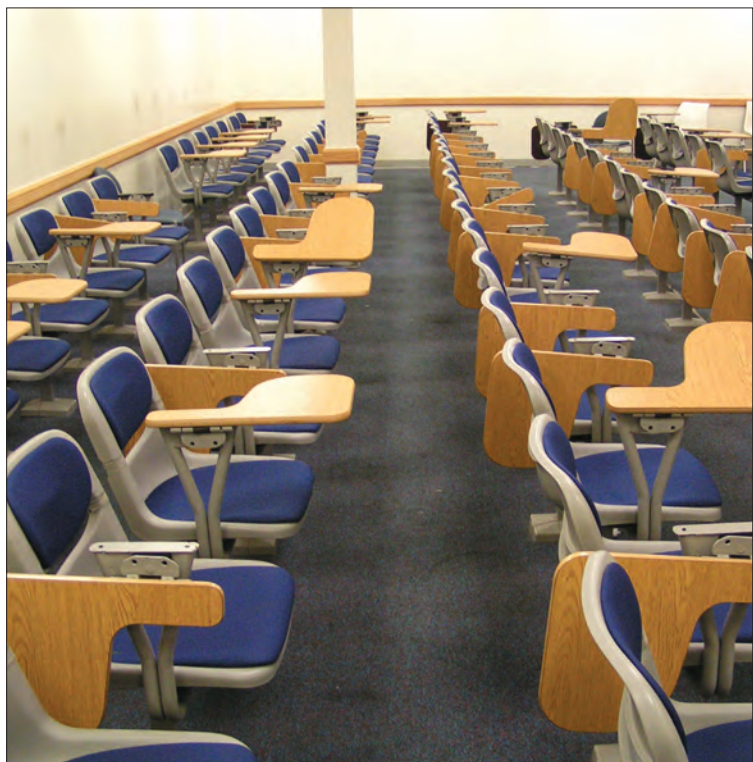
Almonte led the team in several categories, including offensive and defensive rebounds, minutes played, steals, assists, free throws made, points and field goals made.

He did it all and was the team's heart and soul.

All year long, Rouco said that the season record didn't matter and that the conference record and tournament would decide the fate of the team. He was right.

See **COLEMAN**, page 9

Reduction in student enrollment cancels classes



NO STUDENTS!: Several students were forced to change class schedules after certain classes were cancelled. **LUIS NIN/THE BEACON**

By **WILMA HERNANDEZ**
Contributing Writer

At the beginning of this semester, students found themselves rearranging their schedules because required classes were reduced from two sections a week to one section a week at various schools.

The College of Business Administration had a budget reduction for the 2004-2005 academic year of \$255,000, leaving the school with an adjusted budget of \$1,800,000, after 90 percent of the initial budget, \$16,800,000, went to faculty salary. However, according to Don Fair, associate dean for the College of Business Administration, this reduction did not affect classes, because they were able to plan carefully.

"There were not classes cancelled due to budget, but due to enrollment probably," said

Fair.

On the other hand, Steven Moll, director for the College of Business Administration at the Biscayne Bay Campus and a professor for the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, said that reducing classes is a business decision the university sometimes has to make.

"[The] university is looking at it from the business perspective rather than the academic," said Moll. "If they can get a teacher to teach 200 students, why would they pay two teachers to teach 100? It's definitely a good business decision, but not good for the academics, therefore, classes being cut has to do a lot with the budget."

However, he also referred to enrollment as an important key to consider, and he said that cancellation of a class is not determined by whether it is

offered at an undergraduate or graduate level.

"Even though classes get cancelled regardless of their level, graduate classes are less likely to get cancelled due to their lower enrollment expectations compared to undergraduate classes," Moll said. "Also [graduate classes have] funding that is higher than undergraduate's."

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication also attributes the cancellation of classes to enrollment. The school referred to it as class section consolidation, which took place with two required classes: Mass Media and Society and Writing for Public Relations.

According to Pat Rose, associate dean for the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, it is common practice for the school to cancel a

See **REDUCTION**, page 3

NEWSFLASH

ON CAMPUS

Business School may offer classes at Macy's

FIU is working on a deal with Burdines-Macy's that would allow the university to start offering MBA degree classes in a space within the store's Flagler St. location beginning in May.

According to the plan composed under the College of Business Administration, the program would include degree and non-degree courses for students interested in taking classes near their place of work within the metropolitan setting of downtown Miami.

The college, under Dean Jose de la Torre, would be in charge of the program with various FIU business management professors teaching at the locale. Although more than 180 interested students attended an information session, university officials claim that enrollment in the program will likely increase due to the heavy professional population in the area.

The university and Burdines-Macy's have not yet signed an agreement.

The store is located at 22 E. Flagler St.

Award-winning professor passes away

John Nicholls, a marketing professor who taught at FIU since 1972, passed away on March 4 at Mercy Hospital from recently diagnosed pancreatic cancer. Nicholls, an expert in experiential learning and Hispanic marketing, had his research published in several journals including *International Marketing Review*, *Journal of Advertising Research*, *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management* and *Public Manager*.

For his work as an educator at FIU, Nicholls was honored with an Excellence Award in Research, an Excellence Award in Service and an Excellence Award in Teaching. In 2003, Nicholls received the Alumni Association Torch Award for Outstanding Faculty.

Nicholls received his Ph.D. from Indiana University in 1968 and came to live in Miami in 1972 and work at what was at the time, a newly created FIU. He served as the founding chair for the marketing department in the College of Business Administration and held that position sporadically throughout his career.

Nicholls is survived by modern languages professor Florence Yudin, with whom he spent the last 21 years of his life.

NATIONAL NEWS

Florida spring breakers get free calling cards and a message

As thousands of college students migrate to Florida this month for the annual partying binge known as spring break, the Florida Department of Health has a little gift for them: a free 15-minute calling card that gives them a 20-second rape awareness message before each call.

"If you or someone you know has been a victim of sexual assault, confidential help is available from a hotline counselor," says the recording.

The calling cards are part of a \$48,000 effort by state health officials to increase awareness among spring breakers that sex and alcohol can be a dangerous combination, and to let rape victims know where to go for help.

Florida health officials are distributing 100,000 telephone calling cards on key rings to college students in partnership with the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence.

About half the cards were distributed earlier this year to Florida universities. Participating hotels and radio stations in the spring break hotspots of Daytona, Panama City, Key West and Miami Beach will distribute the remaining 50,000 cards throughout this month.

The recorded message gives callers information in English and Spanish about sexual violence prevention and toll-free numbers for local rape crisis centers that offer confidential victim services and prevention education. The cards also have hotline numbers printed on them.

DISCOVER

FIU FEATURES

The Graham Center's Future

By C. JOEL MARINO
Senior Staff Writer

The heavy machinery, debris and construction that workers have seen for the past two years around the University Park's Graham Center virtually disappeared since the completion of its additional wing last semester, but that doesn't necessarily mean they'll be gone for good.

According to administrators, chances are that future expansions and renovations to the building — labeled on the GC website at guc.fiu.edu as the university's "living room" — may one day start again.

"One of the original objectives of the Graham Center was to be a one-stop facility where students could get all their important services in one place," said Ruth Hamilton, the building's director. "There are many needs that we think students still have, and we're working to see how we can satisfy that with the space available."

Though plans for an additional food court in the new glass-encased atrium are in the works, Hamilton said that the highest priority at the moment is updating older sections of the building to meet the fire code.

"The second and third floors currently lack sprinklers. If there is a fire, students could be trapped, so the fire marshall has pretty much said we have to take care of that," Hamilton said. James Wassenaar, director for Student Affairs, Auxiliaries and Operations, said that the project's budget will be under \$1 million and has been in the works for several years.

"This decision was



CHECK IT OUT: The new wing in the Graham Center features the relocation of Santi's, a hair salon, and the addition of Panthers Dry Cleaners. **LUIS NIN/THE BEACON**

made about 10 years ago, but we've had to postpone it because of the different expansion phases the building has seen," said Wassenaar.

The third floor will be the first wing to be refitted. Any offices occupying that space will be moved to the Porter Davis game room next to Gracie's Grill.

After the completion of that floor, various departments on the second floor will be moved either to the Game Room or the third floor.

"The first phase will begin in April and will continue through the summer, but if there are scheduling problems, we might have to continue into the fall, though that's only the last case scenario," Wassenaar said.

Besides renovating the older parts of GC to meet the fire code, another plan is to bring additional student services to the building.

The new GC expansion currently features a larger space for the use of Santi's — a salon under contract with the university formerly occupying a room in

the Piano Lounge — and a newly established dry cleaning service.

A room next to the new Santi's will remain vacant until administrators decide what would be the best option to fill the space.

"We took a survey among students and faculty around six years ago and have been deciding what the biggest concerns seemed to be," Hamilton said.

In the survey, members of the FIU community listed a film developing depot, a vitamin shop, a spa and an electronic device store as their top choices for new services at FIU. The results are pending until a proper bid is placed on the locale.

Another subject Hamilton found important was the addition of more conference centers to GC and an expansion of its ballroom, which currently seats a maximum of 600 people.

"The university has become a major research university. We have many lectures, many speakers coming in and sometimes we don't have space for

them," Hamilton said.

The renovation would include a conference center complete with built-in guests rooms and a large entrance facing the University Park Apartments.

"We're very proud of the Graham Center because of the space and flexibility it provides," Hamilton said. "It's a big university center. You can see students and deans walking by in the same place. [President George W. Bush] has even been here. It's a place that really brings the intersection of all our cultures here at FIU."

GC opened in 1974 and was originally named University House. It was renamed the Ernest R. Graham University Center — after the Florida governor who lobbied for FIU's founding — in 1991 following the addition of Gracie's Grill, the game room and other services.

A second expansion took place in 1997 with the opening of the food court and 23 extra classrooms.

The last expansion began in 2003.

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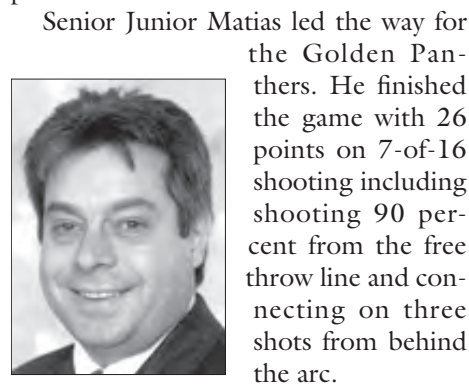
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Matias ends FIU career on high note

SUN BELT, from page 1

proved to favor Rouco's men.



ROUCO

Senior Junior Matias led the way for the Golden Panthers. He finished the game with 26 points on 7-of-16 shooting including shooting 90 percent from the free throw line and connecting on three shots from behind the arc. The senior had been sidelined for most of the game against South Alabama with cramps. Following the game he was administered an intravenous solution that worked.

Matias started the night with 15 points in 17 minutes and hit on all three of his three point attempts over the opening stretch.

"I was cramping really bad yesterday," said Matias. "My trainer [Gigi Garcia] gave me an IV, and I was feeling good. I knew it could be my last game, and I played like it."

Ismael N'Diaye was the only other FIU player in double figures, finishing with 11 points in 27 minutes.

Senior Byron Burnett finished the night with nine points but turned the ball over eight times in the win.

After the game Burnett was all smiles.

"For others it would be a surprise, but for us, no," said center Burnett. "We don't look down on ourselves. We're going to go as far as we can."

LOUISIANA-LAFAYETTE 80 FIU 69

The team fell short of competing for the Sun Belt's automatic bid to the Big Dance, the NCAA Tournament.

The Golden Panthers never led in falling to the Ragin' Cajuns on March 7.

Tiras Wade led the Cajuns with 25 points, 19 of which came in the opening frame, leading the Cajuns to their fourth conference final in seven years.

Junior Matias, wearing his blue road jersey for the last time, led the way for the Golden Panthers with 17 points. All-conference selection Ivan Almonte managed 14, but fell short of his season double-double average with only eight rebounds.

Ismael N'Diaye and senior Byron Burnett joined the two Dominicans in double figures with 10 points a piece.

The Golden Panthers out-shot the Cajuns but in uncharacteristic fashion were out-rebounded and gave up 16 more second chance points.

Louisiana-Lafayette led by nine at the half, 44-35, and never trailed in route to the match-up with the University of Denver.

Australian Chris Cameron joined Wade in double figures finishing with 19 points on 7-of-14 shooting.

Cameron single-handedly put the Golden Panthers away as he connected on three straight, three pointers on three consecutive possessions halfway through the second half.

First year coach Rouco led the Golden Panthers to its best record in five years finishing the season 13-17, a six-and-a-half game improvement from last season.

Cancelled classes force students to alter schedule

REDUCTION, from page 1

class that doesn't meet the enrollment requirement.

"Since the college didn't cancel any classes that did not have two sections, we kept no students from taking classes that they had already registered for," said Rose.

From the students' prospective, the situation is looked at differently.

"Class cancellations affect all students. I registered early for MMC 4609 on Mondays and Wednesdays, and at the

last minute they cancelled and made it available only on Tuesdays," said Noevis Rodriguez, who's majoring in journalism.

According to Rodriguez, not everyone can rearrange schedules around school at the last minute, like her friend Ailsa Hernandez, also majoring in journalism.

"I had registered early and I had arranged my work schedule around my school schedule. They cancelled the class and made it available only on Tuesday, the day I had agreed to work. I ended up without the class, so this semester

I'm taking three classes instead of four, which makes me really angry," said Hernandez.

Students are not the only ones affected by last-minute changes, so is the faculty.

Joyce Peterson, associate dean for the College of Arts and Science said that in the event of a class section cancellation the college does its best to try to accommodate a full-time professor by giving him or her other courses to teach.

But, if the teacher is an adjunct, he or she might be left without a replacement

course to teach.

According to Lee Dickson, the associate dean for the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, the school has not cancelled classes yet, because it has been able to plan around its budget.

"We put together a program that would fit our budget, so that's not a problem yet in our school," said Dickson.

However, the school will have a decrease in its 2005-2006 projected budget from \$3,863,966, to \$4,063,710, the 2004-2005 budget.



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OPINION

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Kabbalah

finding something to believe in

פז'חותסר קפנמל כהגדצב

By **DARA BRAMSON**
Staff Writer

Kabbalah, an aspect of Jewish mysticism, is one of the recent fads that has seeped into the depths of Hollywood.

There is absolutely no ambiguity about a trend being stylish if Madonna, Britney Spears and Gwyneth Paltrow say it is.

Questioning whether or not I am emotionally prepared to give in to another transient craze, which may be out as fast as Uggs were, has been weighing on my mind.

So, the time has finally come for me to decide if fitting this potentially laudable concept into my life is worthwhile.

The first question: Am I willing to dispose of the pricey, luminous jewelry and instead flaunt a red bracelet made out of string?

Though the string is worn to protect against the Evil Eye, a very powerful negative force in the tradition, this one practice would make most self-conscious, bling-flaunting individuals instantaneously opposed to partaking in this custom. So, there goes half of Miami.

Usually, people are more familiar with Madonna's yoga obsession and simple red string than they are with the concept of Kabbalah.

"I don't know anything about it except that Madonna practices it. I think it has something to do with Jewish mysticism," said senior Cathy Wheeler.

Becoming cultured about the teachings of Kabbalah should be prompted by self-interest.

However, let it be known that Brian Draper, lecturer at the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity, finally admitted defeat.

"The Kabbalah bracelet has overtaken [the What Would Jesus Do? bracelet] as the celebrity badge of choice," said Draper in an article posted on www.licc.org.uk.

"I think it's become more of a Hollywood trend now. People seem to be practicing Kabbalah to be cool and sport the little red bracelet," said freshman Amanda Diaz.

In all seriousness, it does not take a string to become a believer in the Kabbalah teachings. Kabbalah is regarded as an esoteric offshoot of Judaism, since both were once taught to a select few through meditative, devotional, mystical and magical practices.

The creation, origin and fate of the soul and the role of human beings are all very central to the practice.

On www.aish.com, Rabbi Shimon Leiberman gives practical insight to

Kabbalah-virgins.

"Kabbalah is to Torah what philosophy is to science. Like science, the Torah gives us the facts that are fully perceived sensually and rationally quantifiable. Like philosophy, Kabbalah gives us the grander abstract picture that the facts present," said Leiberman.

Despite my vows of never having anything to do with an enterprise that Paris Hilton has already infiltrated, I have to be honest.

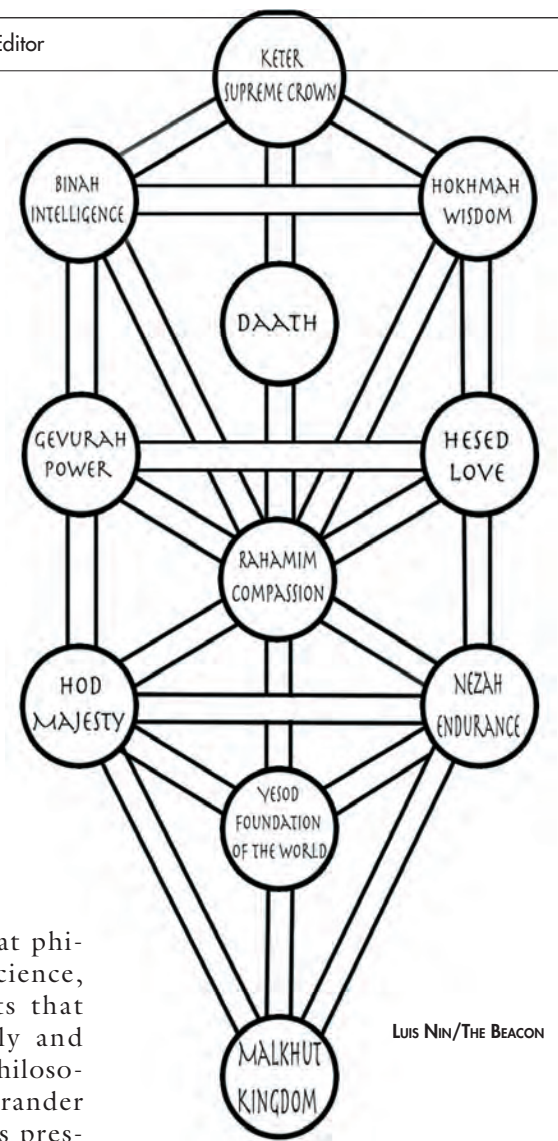
As a non-religious Jew seeking some sort of way to grasp my faith without it being too overwhelming and time consuming, even just learning more about Kabbalah is enticing.

In any religion, one must be exceptionally devoted to attending services regularly, praying daily and eating accordingly.

Not having enough ardor or time to do those things does not trouble my conscience, but pining for a belief does.

Being fiercely opposed to most ephemeral trends is usually a rule of mine.

But it seems like pursuing some Kabalistic teachings in the near future is a possibility for me. Making a true investment in a belief should be taken seriously, but it seems one can devote an awareness to Kab-



LUIS NIN/THE BEACON

alah by gradually increasing his or her knowledge of it and progressively incorporating it into his or her lifestyle.

Kabbalah is just as legitimate as any other belief and has the ability to provide one with a sense of stability and if nothing more, something in which to believe.

Unfortunately, cities like Los Angeles give Kabbalah a bad reputation.

Alongside colossal billboards of designer jeans and upcoming movies are advertisements for The Kabbalah Centre.

They present the red string, which can be purchased on the official website for a mere \$26.

To me, this exhibit implies that the trend will only last as long as the billboards.

If things go too far and you see me around campus with a red string on my wrist, you already have my permission to immediately rip it off.

ררנפמתפפז'חותסר קפנמל כהגדצב



by Leoncio Alvarez
and Alicia Bustamante

Write to us at beaconopinion@yahoo.com!
Forget diamonds, Team Opinion is forever.

Dear Leoncio and Alicia,
Reading the editorial on tuition increases got me to think. If FIU is going to increase our tuition, then why should I stay here?

I have never been happy at FIU and wouldn't mind going somewhere as long as I had a decent education, something I will not be getting here.

What do you guys think? Should I leave?

Thanks,
Ready To Dip

Leoncio says:

If you feel that a degree from FIU will not get you anywhere in life, then you should definitely leave. Why should you stay in a place in which you will feel unhappy?

Leaving will be better outcome for you and for those who like it at FIU who don't want to hear your constant whining about how much FIU sucks. Take initiative and find a place that will make your college experience one you will enjoy.

Alicia says:

RTP, have you ever seen tuition rates at other universities? For four years of school they charge you the price of two luxury cars and your soul. You might as well stay here and pay bargain prices and get your Master's elsewhere.

You get what you pay for. Don't expect filet mignon when you're paying McDonald's prices. If you want filet mignon go to Harvard. Although, you'd probably flunk out.



LUIS NIN/THE BEACON

EDITORIAL

Law system slacks when it comes to celebrities breaking the law

House-hold name Martha Stewart recently came back home after spending a short five months in jail, because she was found guilty.

As soon as the five months were up, Stewart's personal jet was sent to the minimum security prison where she was held to take her to her estate in northern Manhattan.

Upon her arrival, a party took place to celebrate her freedom. In other words, the rich and famous now need celebrations in order to bask in their law breaking habits. Even though Stewart will spend the next six months under house arrest, she still received the minimum sentence possible under federal law.

It is no surprise that as a celebrity, Stewart has not only received much more attention than others who have broken the same law, but that she has also received the sort of lenience not known to others guilty of the same crime. This is not only an affront to the concept of a fair judicial system but to our very culture.

Have celebrities become so important that they are above the law? Granted, Stewart received punishment and will always be considered an ex-con. However, Stewart has not only received praise for persevering through adversity but also has moved forward in her career.

Her next move will be to star in a reality television show fashioned after Donald Trump's hit, "The Apprentice." Whether or not contestants will compete to be the first to have a high-profile trial which will launch them into celebrityhood, has yet to be determined.

– Leoncio Alvarez, Opinion Editor
Alicia Bustamante, Opinion Page Designer

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Parking and Traffic Office closes lot without notification

At some point last week, FIU's Parking and Traffic Office decided to close off Parking Lot Six to non-resident students. The only warning we got was a citation on our windshields and, in some cases, a boot on our wheels. What, no e-mail?

From the business perspective, I find developing a parking and traffic office to be very profitable for the university.

I'd like to express my outrage about how we, students, don't work part-time or full-time jobs to pay for a power-tripping rent-a-cop department.

At the rate we get ticketed, why does the university even charge a parking fee through our tuition?

On top of the fact that they give citations away like candy, we, as their customers, still have to cover their asses financially with a continually rising tuition rate that is increasing too fast for comfort.

Tuition rates, that are probably the direct results of irresponsible decisions that end in \$11.5 million settlements with the Federal Government (as reported by *The Beacon* in their Feb. 21st issue), will probably result in our parking fee going up. Their justification: new parking facilities.

It seems that we commuters come in only second to university on-campus residents ... maybe even third, after the fair's guests, who are now allowed this additional parking.

Back to Parking Lot Six. It is imperative that this lot not be closed off to enrolled students who do not live on campus. We all know that both the Gold and Blue garages are packed by 10 a.m. and the main lot east of Graham Center is almost always filled to capacity all day.

To put it all into perspective, when The Youth Fair opens later this month, parking lots Five and Six and the grass behind Parking Lot Six will all be off limits to the students.

In addition to this, Parking and Traffic has allowed the fair to post signs that now read, ADDITIONAL PARKING at Parking Lot Six. My question is: Where does that leave me? Are fair guests permitted to park in the new residential parking lot?

Most students would argue (as would I) that they did not see the newly-posted signs at the entrance to Parking Lot Six and were surprised to see a citation plastered to their windshield. Parking and Traffic will probably say, "The signs were clear and completely visible!"

I don't know about anybody else, but after attending FIU for almost four years, you come to get used to some things – like driving confidently into a parking lot that has always been accessible to you. This ritual, in most cases, does not trigger your mind to look out for drastic changes like these overnight.

In addition to this, campus residents were the only ones to receive e-mails about the parking changes. What about the rest of us?

It seems that we commuters come in only second to university on-campus residents ... maybe even third, after the fair's guests, who are now allowed this additional parking.

As a future alumnus of FIU, few things will give me more joy than to help my alma mater prosper and grow to be the best university in Florida. But let's hope the university learns to listen to our concerns.

And students, let's show a little more interest in the direction of our university's policies.

Antonio M. Valcarcel
Senior

WINNER & LOSER



WINNER

Chinese elder: A 104-year-old Chinese woman was given permanent residence in Australia because no airline was willing to transport her because of her age. She's now the only woman attempting to get a fake I.D. that will actually make her younger.



LOSER

Snail carrier: A woman was arrested in the United Kingdom for allegedly carrying 104 kilograms of snails to be exported in her luggage. Her export was exposed when, in reaction to being offered salt in her in-flight meal, she cried out "Don't kill my children!"

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

If a woman was on the next presidential ballot, would you vote for her?

- Yes. It's time America undergoes some kind of change.
- Depends on her qualifications. Not anyone can be president.
- I would vote for anyone. As long as another Bush doesn't get into office.
- I definitely would not vote for a woman. The president's job can only be done by a man.
- I'm still going to vote for Nader.

Cast your vote at www.beaconnewspaper.com

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Letters to the Editor must be dropped off in GC 210 at the University Park campus, WUC 124 at the Biscayne Bay Campus or sent to beacon@fiu.edu. Letters must include the writer's full name, year in school, major/department and a valid phone number for verification purposes. If brought in to an office, a legitimate ID may be accepted instead of a phone number. *The Beacon* reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and/or spacing constraints. Letters must adhere to a maximum of 400 words.



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Got something to say?
Post a comment on whichever story you like (or dislike) at www.beaconnewspaper.com

KONICHIWA!

JAPANESE MUSIC'S UNIQUE SOUND GAINS POPULARITY AMONG AMERICANS



SOUNDS FROM FAR EAST: Japanese band, POLYSICS, with their eclectic blend of music insanity, has been well-received in the United States along with several other Japanese musical groups. COURTESY PHOTO

By **PETER LARSEN**
The Orange County Register

"I can't get no -"
The Japanese teenager tuned into a Tokyo radio station listens more closely.
"- satis ... faction!"
The boy, Hiro, turns the volume up.
"I can't get me no -"
Eyes widen, he smiles.
"- satis...faction!"
"Oh, my God, this is rock music!" he thinks.
And I try _ and I try _ and I try t-t-t-try try!
And by that point, really - what else could the kid do but start a rock 'n' roll band?
"That song changed my life," said Hiro, who modeled his band, POLYSICS, not on the Rolling Stones, who wrote that song on his radio, but on Devo, the quirky new-wave icons whose cover version he heard.
POLYSICS plays wildly energetic pop-punk rock in matching red jumpsuits.
On its own, it's an exotic

import, an eye-opening blend of the Ramones and Kraftwerk, to name a few more influences.
But look beyond and you'll see an ever-increasing wave of Japanese bands on tour in the United States, signing record deals with labels here, playing concert tours and winning over more fans to their unique twist on the American art of rock.
Listen and you'll hear heavy-metal bands, glam-meets-kabuki bands, bubblegum pop queens and leather-clad garage punks - all of them absorbing Western influences, throwing it in the mixer with their Japanese style and sending it echoing back across the ocean like a gigantic power chord from the East.
"Maybe they can figure out a way to mix Link Wray with Devo with Van Halen," said Mike LaVella, owner of Gearhead Records, trying to explain the appeal of Japanese bands such as his own label's Electric Eel Shock.
"And by the time you get it back, it's something you've never heard," he said.

"That's the genius. It's familiar. But it's different."
One of the first Japanese bands to cross over to hip music fans here was Shonen Knife, three young women whose infectious poppy punk delighted American alt-rock stars such as Kurt Cobain, who invited them to open shows for Nirvana.
Two decades later, Shonen Knife is still playing here and winning over new fans with each tour.
"The first time, most of all fans are young people, but now not only young, but middle-aged and kids, too," said singer-guitarist Naoko Yamano by e-mail from Japan. "I wrote a song for the Powerpuff Girls - that's why kid fans were increased."
She believes the huge popularity of anime - Japanese animation - has helped bands from Japan find fans here.
"It is one reason that Americans became more receptive to Japanese pop culture," Yamano said.
For Aki Rogers, 23, a Cer-

ritos College, Calif., student, an eighth-grade Japanese language teacher introduced her to boy bands Tokio and Smap. Soon, through anime, she discovered her favorite band, L'Arc-en-Ciel.
"For me, mostly, it's the music," said Rogers. "Not all of it is so radically different from American music, but I don't hear it on the radio at all, so I don't get the feeling that the songs are overplayed."
"First time, when we played in Memphis, just four or five people came to our show," said Seiji, the singer-guitarist of Guitar Wolf, a garage punk band that models itself after black-leather rockers from Elvis Presley to Johnny Thunders and Joan Jett.
Twelve years and 20 trips to the United States later, Guitar Wolf has many more fans, though Seiji jokes that they're all men - "cute girls seldom come to our show."
"Now they are infected, so they have to come back to the show," he said of how his band built its audience gig by gig.

So is the day approaching when a Japanese rock band makes it big here?
Yaz Noya, executive vice president for Tofu Records in Santa Monica, Calif., said the label believes it is, noting that college radio has already embraced bands like POLYSICS.
"Those people are trend-setters and like the new stuff, and they all loved the Japanese music," said Noya.
LaVella, who signed the Hives in the United States shortly before the Swedish band became a buzz band here, believes Electric Eel Shock can do just as well.
"I would just hope that it's not a fad," he said of the attention Japanese bands are winning now. "Because so many bands work and work and work to be here."
That's Hiro's dream now, too: "I really like fans to feel we are POLYSICS, not that we're from Japan or we play J-pop," he said.
"I want people to come to a show because we play rock."

Store lets gamers test new titles under ideal conditions



GAME ON: Vish Agarwal (right) and his brother, Varun, play a video game at Escape, a new electronic game center set up by Best Buy electronics stores. **KNIGHT RIDDER TRIBUNE**

By **ALLAN JOHNSON**
Chicago Tribune

To take a break from his linen/bedding business, Vish Agarwal likes to sneak away for 45 minutes or so to shoot a round of golf. Luckily for him, a "course" is just a few doors away.

"I enjoy this more than anything," said Agarwal, 30, from a cushy seat in front of a plasma-screen television, hitting a few balls on the "Tiger Woods PGA Tour" video game in Escape, a high-end electronics/gaming retail store in Chicago.

Rather than an old-fashioned video game arcade, Escape is a first-of-its-kind boutique, a test site from electronics retailer Best Buy. You wouldn't know the chain was behind it. Its yellow and black logo is practically non-existent, and the place looks more like a computer geek's loft with its hardwood floors and exposed brick.

But with enough cash, you'll experience something that can be duplicated only if you're friends with a video game-crazed pro athlete.

That's due to the plasma-screen monitors located in four gaming pods. The screens are 40 inches or more, and the pods feature theater-quality sound and carry PlayStation and Xbox systems.

"It's not a little monitor, like a regular (TV)," Agarwal said. "It's bigger; the colors are much more vivid. Then they have Surround-Sound. You get to pick whichever game you want to play, whichever console."

The pods' theme environments include one with Wrigley Field seats and another with steering wheels for race games.

Hunched at this particular pod were Vanessa Vazquez, 18, and Anjelica Garcia, 17, highschool students engaged in "Grand Theft Auto 3."

"It looked real because I want to start learning how to drive," said Garcia. "(My boyfriend) learned on the first 'Grand Theft Auto.'"

Vazquez, who said she isn't a huge

video game player, does like to test games, but said the stores she has sampled in don't carry "this type of equipment . . . I like (this) better."

Escape also has two private suites for parties of up to 10 people.

One features a 100-inch projection screen with a crystal-clear picture and quality sound, with a 50-inch plasma screen hiding behind it.

The other suite has two monitors set up for competitive game play through the Internet. You also can watch high-definition broadcasts on both monitors.

Besides the video games, Escape has the latest gadgets for sale: digital cameras, computers, iPods, cell phones and stuff that only those who are hip would know what they did. But gamers might want more game stations than just the four.

All of this is going to cost you. The pods rent for \$10 an hour; suites are \$50 an hour, with a two-hour minimum. A \$9.95 yearly Escape membership is required for all game play.

Agarwal doesn't mind the cost. "I come here just to get away from (my store) for a half-hour or 40 minutes," he said. "Even if you spent 15 minutes a day, (you) get your mind off of things and relax."

Getting people to spend some time in the joint is one of the goals of Escape, according to assistant manager Joe Obucina.

"You're able to shop, (and) you're able to hang out," added Obucina, referring to the store's cafe, which sells sandwiches and salads (no alcohol), lounges for relaxation and Internet access.

Julie St. Marie, part of the team that put the Escape concept together, said it also was a goal to attract young men who are into video games and gadgets in general.

"The gaming piece is truly a differentiator within the marketplace," she said. "We want people to stay. We want them to try out things. We want them to get a feel for what they are buying before they buy them."

That should be enough of a lure for gamers, who are mostly males averaging 29 years old, and who helped to buy a record \$7 billion in video games in 2003, according to the Entertainment Software Association.

What's better than "test-driving" games on equipment that brings out the best in sound and picture, said Geoff Keighley for Business 2.0, a monthly business and technology magazine.

"People really want to be sure they're buying the right game. So I think the idea of having to spend \$9 or something to experience it or test-drive it before you actually plop down your 50 bucks is probably a smart move," said Keighley.

The closest thing to Escape are offshoots of a phenomenon in South Korea called the PC Bang - laptops and monitors set up in a variation on Internet cafes, where gamers hook up and play against each other. St. Marie said there might be around 2,000 such "mom-and-pop" outlets in the United States. Unlike PC Bangs, Escape offers both Internet and non-Internet gaming.

The concept isn't new, according to Mark Friedler, chief executive for GameDaily, an online gaming industry newsletter.

"What is new is the fact that the technology of gaming is pretty advanced, and the interest in this type of thing shows the interest of the social nature of gaming," said Friedler.

Even though Agarwal said that "marketed right, I think it could be the next big thing," some believe a game is a game.

"If you play it on a regular television or if you play it on a plasma screen, the visual aspects of video games aren't like high-definition television, where you might see some improvement," said Matt Hunt, a 26-year-old investor who also played Tiger Woods' golfing game for a few minutes.

"If you want to play video games," he added, "go home and play video games."

WEEKend

THURSDAY • MARCH 10

WHAT: SGA Lectures & P.E.A.C.E "Week of Difference" present: Dr. Maya Angelou

WHERE: Pharmed Arena

WHEN: Doors open at 4 p.m. Lecture begins at 5:30 p.m.

HOW MUCH: Free (For more info. Call 305-531-1001)

WHAT: The Seven Deadly Sins Of The Petite Bourgeoisie: The Music of Kurt Weill

WHERE: Gracie's Grill

WHEN: 12 p.m.

FRIDAY • MARCH 11

WHAT: Steven & Dorothea Green Critics' Lectures Series: Philippe De Montebello

WHERE: Frost Art Museum

WHEN: 8 p.m. - 10 p.m.

HOW MUCH: Free

WHAT: SPC Films presents "The Incredibles"

WHERE: GC 140

WHEN: 6 p.m., 9 p.m.

HOW MUCH: Free

SATURDAY • MARCH 12

WHAT: FIU Dance: 2005 Faculty Repertory Concert

WHERE: Wertheim Performing Arts Center

WHEN: All Day

HOW MUCH: \$8 (Students) \$12 (FIU Faculty, Staff and Seniors) \$15 (General Admittance)

WHAT: Steven & Dorothea Green Critics' Lectures Series: Philippe De Montebello

WHERE: Frost Art Museum

WHEN: 8 p.m. - 10 p.m.

HOW MUCH: Free

SUNDAY • MARCH 13

WHAT: FIU Dance: 2005 Faculty Repertory Concert

WHERE: Wertheim Performing Arts Center

WHEN: All Day

HOW MUCH: Free

WHAT: FIU Symphony Orchestra performs at the 7th Annual American National Chopin Piano Competition

WHERE: Gusman Center For Performing Arts

WHEN: 3 p.m.

HOW MUCH: Free



March 10, 1993

Dr. David Gunn, who performed abortions at several clinics in Florida and Alabama, is shot and killed during an anti-abortion protest at the Pensacola Women's Medical Services clinic. Dr. Gunn was getting out of his car in the clinic's parking lot when Michael Griffin shouted, "Don't kill any more babies!" and shot the doctor three times in the back. Griffin immediately surrendered to a nearby police officer.

- historychannel.com

Diesel pacifies brawn in family comedy

By **ELENA SANTALO**
Staff Writer

He's cool. He's tough. He's been proclaimed the newest, hottest action hero in Hollywood, but is he also a babysitter?

Vin Diesel, starring in the newest Disney film, "The Pacifier," plays Navy SEAL, Shane Wolfe, who is used to tackling the fiercest challenges, until his duty becomes to watch over the five children of an assassinated scientist who was working on important government secrets somewhere in the house.

Although he balances protecting the children from the bad guys and keeping house, Diesel transforms from his typical, stern sergeant-like attitude into a sensitive and comedic character, mainly in his scenes with young Lulu (Morgan York). For the first time, you see that he has a flair for light comedy, particularly when he does his "Peter Panda Dance." Far from the kind of roles he usually plays, it's great to see him interacting with children. It's also great to watch him bond with each child in a humorous but heartfelt way as he helps the family.

However, what brings the most personality to the movie is the funny encounters in which Diesel and the family get involved.

Because he keeps a close eye on the children all day, the film is mostly set while they are in school. Here, most problems arise with the two elder children, Zoe (Brittany Snow) and Seth (Max Thieriot), who in dealing with the loss of their father, struggle with driving and bullies. This brings about the most hilarious scene of the movie, in which Shane (Diesel) wrestles with his very own nemesis, Vice Principal Murney (Brad Garrett).

Ultimately, this role suits Diesel just fine. Although somewhat predictable, he reveals Shane's big heart, as he becomes Girl Scout Den Mother, driver's-ed teacher, diaper changer and director of "The Sound of Music."

Through all of this, he brings his life and the family's back together, which is basically what "The Pacifier" is about – family and making someone part of your family. It's sappy, but it did it for me.

If you are in the mood for an enjoyable, light-hearted film (especially if you want to go with your family), catch this one, playing now.

★★★★★

"The Pacifier"
Starring Vin Diesel
Directed by Adam Shankman

FILM



WHAT'S THAT SMELL?: Vin Diesel explores a softer side of himself in the family-comedy, "The Pacifier," in which he teams up to protect five children from assassins. **COURTESY PHOTO**

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Rouco promises to compete for title next season

COLEMAN, from page 1

The team finished with an overall record 13-17 on the season and 4-10 in Sun Belt play. Despite the losing record, the team came a long way from last season.

Last year's team finished with only one

conference victory and five wins combined. It was a team full of individuals, who only cared about themselves and not the player along side of them.

Rouco's team is the surprise of the year. FIU has not advanced this far since 1999 when the conference only consisted of eight teams.

The team showed us a glimpse of what to expect next season.

Rouco knows that after his team's strong play, they will be better next season.

"We will come back next year and try to win the conference championship," said Rouco. "We don't expect anything less."

As the game ended, Ismael N'Diaye, who has been battling a calf injury all year, said he would rest his injury for two weeks and then head back to the weight room in order to prepare for next season.

This is an example of the type of players on this team - players who work hard in order to be ready for their teammates.

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UMass and B-CC shutout FIU softball

SOFTBALL, from page 12

scored on a dropped ball, giving the Owls a 1-0 lead.

FIU tied the score 1-1 in the top of the third. Brittany Witherow led off the inning with a walk, later advanced to third on a two-out single by Deomni Murray and eventually scored on a double steal.

FAU quickly regained their lead in the bottom of the third and held on for a 2-1 win. The run came on an RBI single from Piazza, which scored Christina Thompson.

UMASS 3, FIU 0

The Golden Panthers were unable to put together any kind of offensive production, as the team was blanked 3-0 by UMass on March 5. Amanda Nealer struck out eight batters and gave up one hit and one unearned run in four innings of work. The loss dropped Nealer's record to 7-3 for the season.

Despite the loss by Nealer, Gwydir knows that part of the problem was FIU's ineffective hitting.

"We just need to hit the ball better,"

Gwydir said. "Amanda pitched fine, despite coming off an injury and missing a week."

The Minutemen then added two more runs in the top of the fifth and sealed the 3-0 shutout victory against FIU.

BETHUNE-COOKMAN 1, FIU 0

The winner was decided after eight innings, as Bethune-Cookman pulled off the win on a muffed throw to first base with two outs in the bottom of the eighth on March 5.

Megan McGuire scored the game-winning run for the Wildcats, as the ball squirted away from the first baseman, and she trotted home for the 1-0 victory. The win improves Bethune-Cookman's record to 8-12 for the year.

Amanda Nealer picked up the loss for the Golden Panthers and fell to 7-4 on the year. Lauren McCoy went the distance for the Wildcats, striking out eight batters.

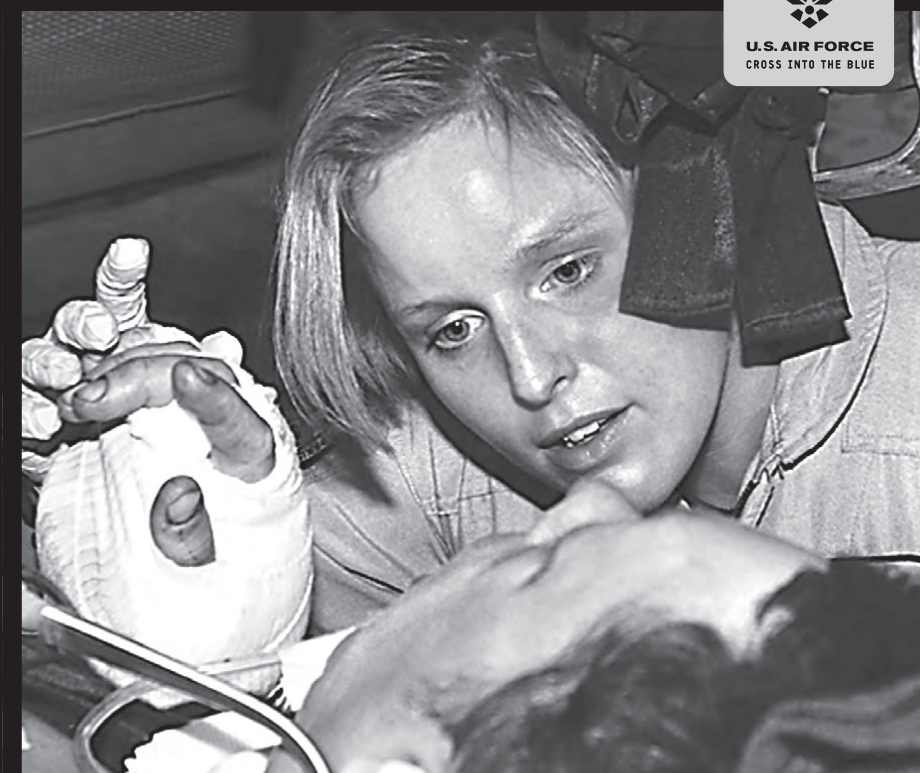
With two straight losses with no runs, Gwydir knows her team's weakness.

"We just need to hit the ball better," Gwydir said.

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Baseball routs Chicago State and Wagner

BASEBALL, from page 12

time I came out and did my job.”

TEMPLE 10, FIU 4

In the final game against the Temple Owls, three untimely FIU errors led to the team's demise.

Senior David Asher pitched seven innings, allowed three runs (one unearned) on four hits, walked four and struck out a career-high nine batters.

Junior relief pitcher Matt Rainey was saddled with his third loss of the season.

He pitched one inning of work, allowed three runs (one unearned) on two hits, walked two and struck out one.

Freshman left fielder James McOwen went 2-for-5 with the only three RBIs for FIU.

After scoring in the bottom of the first inning, the Golden Panthers allowed one run in the fourth and two more in the sixth for a 3-1 deficit.

FIU would not score again until the bottom of the seventh off McOwen's two-RBI double into the left-centerfield gap, which tied the game at three.

Rainey came in to pitch the eighth inning and allowed what would be Temple's game-winning run.

In the ninth inning, Hernandez came into the game in place of Rainey, with runners on first and second.

The first batter he faced singled, and a run scored from second made it 5-3.

After getting two outs, Temple broke the game open and scored five unearned, following a fielding error by Yema (that would have been the third out of the inning) then a throwing error by Dunn.

“We didn't get the job done out of the bullpen today,” Price said. “Asher did his job. We were still in the ball game, but we got to the pen and that's where the wheels came off. [Also] there was a routine flyball, and we just didn't make the play there.”

FIU 9, CHICAGO STATE 3

In a game against a 0-13 team, FIU struggled offensively until the middle of the game and finished with a season-high of 10 stolen bases as a team.

Redshirt junior John Banke, in his first

start of the season, went four innings, allowed three runs on two hits, walked four batters and struck out one.

Junior Frank “the Tank” Gonzalez got the win in relief of Banke. He pitched five shut-out innings, allowed five hits, struck out six batters and walked none.

“I was real pleased with Frank,” Price said. “He went and threw strikes and kept the ball down, and we made the plays behind him so that we could win.”

Senior Dennis Diaz went 2-for-5 with three stolen bases and an RBI.

Junior Nick Cadena went 2-for-4 with two steals and a run scored.

Chicago State tagged Banke for two runs in the first inning.

FIU replied with a run off a Michael Lopez double to right field in the bottom of the inning.

CSU made it 3-1 after the top of the fourth. But the Golden Panthers replied in the bottom of the inning again.

With the bases loaded and nobody out, Lopez scored on a Chris Dunn fielder's choice. This left runners on the corners for freshman second baseman Corey Lozano, who hit a two-run double down the right field line.

FIU took a 5-3 lead it would never relinquish.

“I moved up on the plate because the

left-handed pitcher was working primarily away,” said Lozano. “I got the pitch I was looking for and put the best thing on it I could.”

FIU added an insurance run in the seventh and four more in the eighth.

FIU 14, WAGNER 3

FIU scored their 14 runs in the last five innings of a game in which they never trailed.

Freshman starting pitcher Elih Villanueva (4-1) went eight innings, allowed two runs on seven hits, struck out five and walked none.

Sophomore catcher Cody Jacobs and Lozano two hits, two runs scored and three RBIs a piece.

Junior Luis Rivera also had two hits and had two RBIs. James McOwen went 3-for-4 with an RBI and two stolen bases. FIU had 15 hits for the game.

FIU took a 4-0 in the bottom of the fourth inning. Two runs came off a two-RBI single by Dennis Diaz. The third run came off a throwing on the same play. The fourth run came off a single by McOwen.

FIU plays a three-game series with Rutgers University beginning March 11 at 7 p.m.

Gordon Biersch

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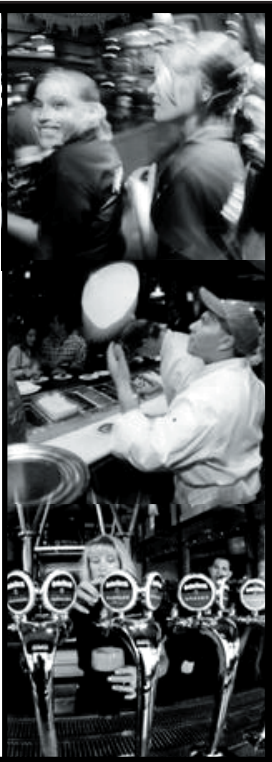
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SPORTS

12 - March 10, 2005

THE BEACON

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Consistent defense keeps FIU winning

By XAVIER VILLARMARZO
Staff Writer

The Golden Panthers won three of four games with wins March 4, 6 and 7, and a loss on March 5, all at University Park Stadium. FIU raised their record to 12-5 and continues with their next 13 games at home.

FIU 4, TEMPLE 1

In the first of a two-game set versus Temple University, FIU's pitching staff led them to the win.

Starting pitcher Ammer Cabrera (2-1) went six innings, allowed one unearned run on four hits, struck out four and walked four.

"I felt strong, [threw] strikes ... tried to limit the amount of mistakes," said Cabrera. "With good defense behind me and good hitting, we're going to win a lot of ball games."

In a game lacking in offense, redshirt sophomore Chris Dunn and juniors Michael Lopez, Yosvel Barroso and Yahmed Yema had the only hits of the game for FIU.

"We got pitching and defense," said Head coach Danny Price. "I thought we just played good enough to win. I think we're better."

FIU got on the board in the bottom of the first inning off a double by Yema that scored a runner from second.

The very next inning, Temple tied the score at one, but FIU retook the lead in the bottom of that inning off a fielding error that scored Barroso, making it 2-1.

FIU scored their final two insurance runs in the bottom of the fifth inning.

Senior Danny "the Vulture" Hernandez earned his third save of the season after having a shaky outing in his previous appearance.

"It felt like I let my team down [in my last outing], but they came through and helped me out," said Hernandez. "So this



TWO FOR ONE: Shortstop Luis Rivera finishes a double play against Temple University. GEOFF ANDERSON/SPECIAL TO THE BEACON

See BASEBALL, page 11

Softball suffers four straight losses at tournament

By NIKOLAY OREKHOV
Staff Writer

The FIU women's softball team came into the Doubletree Worth Classic on March 5 at FAU stadium in search of its first tournament win in three weeks. The Golden Panthers effort was, however, halted by four straight defeats.

FIU dropped the first two games of the tournament on March 5 to UMass and Bethune-Cookman, collecting a total of only five hits and no runs scored.

The following day the results were no better for the Golden Panthers; the team lost two more games to FAU and the consolation game to UMass.

FIU finished with four losses for the weekend and lost their fifth consecutive overall, dropping the team's record to 15-9.

The competition of teams was a competitive one in the tournament, some-



Kim Gwydir, Softball coach

We played some very good competition and the ball just didn't bounce our way. We just hit a dry patch.

thing coach Kim Gwydir acknowledged.

"We played some very good competition and the ball just didn't bounce our way," said Gwydir. "We just hit a dry patch."

UMASS 3, FIU 2

After blanking FIU, 3-0, in the first game of the tournament, UMass continued its success, winning its second game against the Golden Panthers and placing third in the tournament on March 6.

Jenna Busa pitched a complete game and recorded her first win of the season

(1-2) for the Minutemen.

Busa gave up two hits, two runs and struck out four, as UMass improved to 3-6 for the year.

Despite a solid pitching performance from Tiffany Ore, with nine strikeouts in six innings of work, the Golden Panthers lost, dropping their overall record to 15-9, as Ore recorded her second loss of the season (4-2).

FIU jumped to a 1-0 lead in the fifth inning, but were unable to hold on.

The Minutemen quickly went ahead 3-1, for good in the sixth inning, when Denise Denis belted a three-run home

run. Denis picked up her first three hits of the season and finished the game 3-for-3 and with a home run.

FAU 2, FIU 1

Earlier that afternoon, the Golden Panthers lost another nail-biter, 2-1, to Florida Atlantic University. Both starting pitchers went the distance, with Candice Freel earning the win to improve to 6-6 on the year. Amanda Nealer struck out eight batters in six innings of work, while giving up two unearned runs.

With the loss, FIU fell to 15-8 for the season, as the Owls picked up their second win of the season improving to 2-1.

FAU jumped on the scoreboard first in the bottom of the second inning, when Jenn Piazza led off the inning with a double to right-center field and later

See SOFTBALL, page 10