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 conference playoffs.

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

"That guy's a man," said South Alabama 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 ended 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 onlookers on the campus of North Texas University.

The Golden Panthers, playing in road jerseys, held South Alabama's leading scorer 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. 5 after changing the conference schedule. The neutral court in Denton, the home of North Texas, was not determined by whether it is offered at an undergraduate or graduate level.

"Even though classes get canceled regardless of their level, graduate classes are less likely to get canceled 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.

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The Beacon – March 10, 2005

NEWSFLASH
ON CAMPUS
Business School may offer classes at Macy’s

FLU 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 faculty members 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 reached 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 pan-creatic cancer. Nicholls, an expert in experiential learning and Hispanic marketing, had his research published in several journals including Interna-tional 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 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 Uni-ver-sity 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 Judin, 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 2-second rape aware-ness 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 dan-gerous 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 Day-tona, 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 pre-vention 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 com-pletion of its additional wing last semester, but that doesn’t necessarily mean they’ll be gone for good.

According to adminis-trators, chances are that future expansions and renovations to the build- ing — labeled on the GC site at gc.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 shop for students where they could get all their important services in one place,” said Ruth Hamilton, the building’s director. “There are still needs that I 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 sprink-lers. If there is a fire, stu-dents could be trapped, so the fire marshal has pretty much told us 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 sev-eral years.

“This decision was made about 10 years ago, but we’ve had to postpone it because of the differ-ent expansion phases the building has seen,” Wassenaar said.

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 depart-ments on the second floor will be moved either to the Game Room or the second floor.

“The first phase will begin in April and will con-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 old section 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 for-merly 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 pending an agreement on what would be the best option to fill the space.

“We took a survey among students and fac-ulty 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 educational device store as their top choices for new services at FLU. The results are pending until a proper bid is placed on the local.

Another subject Ham-ilton 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 guest rooms and a large meeting room facing the Uni-verse 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 gover-nor who lobbied for FIU’s founding — in 1991 following the addition of Gracie’s Grill, the game room and other services.

A second expansion began in 1999 that took place in 1997 with the opening of the food court and 23 extra class-room.

The last expansion began in 2003.

CHECK IT OUT:
The new wing in the Graham Center features the relocation of Santi’s, a hair salon, and the Gainesville Panthers Dry Cleaners.
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 each.

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

REDDUCTION, 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, they that 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 Noelvis 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.,
“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.

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 permission to immediately rip it off my wrist, you already have my permission to immediately rip it off.

As a non-religious Jew seeking to grasp my faith in 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 emotionally prepared to give in to 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 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.

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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 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.

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Editorial

Law system slacks when it comes to celebrities breaking the law

Household 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

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

Letters to the Editor

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@broward.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.

Letters

Antonio M. Valcarcel Sr.
Senior

The Beacon – March 10, 2005

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 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 or full-time jobs to pay for our tuition?

As a future alumnus of Florida, I find developing a parking and traffic office to be very profitable for the university.

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 come out of class that week to find 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.

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.

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Speak your mind, online!

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

OPINION

www.beaconnewspaper.com
Japanese music’s unique sound gains popularity among Americans

“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-t-try try try try try.

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, POLYSCIS, not on the Rolling Stones, who wrote “I can’t get me no” for Tofu Records in Santa Monica, Calif., said the label believes it is, noting that college radio has already embraced bands like POLYSCIS.

“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 POLYSCIS, not that we’re from Japan or we play J-pop,” he said.

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 is helping bands like POLYSCIS.

One of the first Japanese bands to cross over to hit 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.

“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.

“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.

Second, Shonen Knife is still playing here and winning over new fans with each tour.

“At the 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.

“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.”

And by the time you get back, it’s something you’ve never heard,” he said.

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Store lets gamers test new titles under ideal conditions

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, “course” is just a few doonies 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 top-quality sound and carry PlayStation and Xbox systems.

“It’s 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 Angelica Garcia, 17, highschool students engaged in “Grand Theft Auto 2.”

“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 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. “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’re 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 build 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 Marc 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.”
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 baby-sitter?

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.

FILM
★★★★ “The Pacifier”
Starring Vin Diesel
Directed by Adam Shankman

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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 Withrow 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.

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 inning.

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. “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.

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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.

“TI didn’t the game 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, 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 in and threw strikes and we just didn’t make the plays behind him so that we could win.”

Senior Dennis Diaz went 2-0-5 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. The 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 3-2 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 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 2-for-4 with an RBI and two steals.

FIU had 15 hits for the game.

FIU took a 4-0 lead in the bottom of the fourth inning. Two runs came of 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.

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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.

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

Kim Gwydir, Softball coach

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, something 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 Buza pitched a complete game and recorded her first win of the season (1-2) for the Minutemen.

Buza 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 Tiffanny 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