TROY STORY

Men and women look for weekend wins

STEPHANIE GABRIEL
Asst. Sports Director

As the FIU women’s basketball team enters the thick of their Sun Belt Conference schedule it will try to break a streak of three consecutive seasons without a winning conference record. The Golden Panthers have not had a winning percentage above .500 in conference play since the 2005-2006 season. That year the team went 19-13, 9-5 in the conference.

The Golden Panthers have not had a winning percentage above .500 in conference play since the 2005-2006 season. That year the team went 19-13, 9-5 in the conference.

The Golden Panthers toppings North Texas, 64-55. Since that road trip the Golden Panthers (7-5, 2-3 SBC) have dropped two straight games to conference rivals South Alabama and New Orleans but most recently they defeated Louisiana-Monroe at home to pick up their second conference win of the season.

Next up is a vital match-up against Troy on Saturday, January 9 at the U.S. Century Bank Arena. Leading the way for FIU on the offensive side, average about 11 points per game, are Monika Bosilj and Elisa Carey. Carey also averages 9.4 rebounds and 2.6 blocked shots per game.

For the Trojans, the main threat is forward Donette McClair, who has put up 13.2 points per game on 53.7 percent shooting this season. Before escaping with a one point win at HOOPS, page 7

CSO-MMC

Meeting outlines final months

FRANCISCO MARADIAGA
Staff Writer

The Student Government Council Cabinet at Modesto Maidique campus will be slimmer while it attempts to end its run during the next four months.

SGC-MMC President Anthony Rionda mentioned during the Jan. 6 joint meeting with both the executive cabinet and SGC-MMC Senate that some cabinet positions had and would be let go and that the open spaces will not be filled.

Rionda cited that with only four months left in his tenure, it would make more sense to just combine the jobs within the remaining members of the cabinet. He said a report of these changes would be presented to the senate for their approval and trusted the legislative body would be receptive because, according to Rionda, they had proved to be "fiscally responsible."

Chief of Staff Nick Antiello is in charge of the changes and could not be reached in time for this article.

To the remaining members, Rionda said he had two requests: to finish the programs they have started and to leave the ground work for future student government.

Rionda also mentioned his desire to start a new push with SGA’s marketing that, according to him, has been "lackluster." The Web-site will also get some attention as part of the effort.

“We are going to launch this final push,” Rionda told the cabinet. “It is starting immediately.”

In order to help Campus Life manage student organizations in a more efficient way, they have turned to OrgSync, a Web site that helps universities manage all their student organizations and in one centralized system. The OrgSync Web site will help Campus Life and the Council of Student Organizations manage student organizations better because it will keep track of every member in each club using each members’ individual Panther ID numbers.

Allegations of non-FIU students participating in student organizations were brought to the attention of Campus Life officials this past fall semester, when Campus Life was notified to that the ‘Anything Goes Anime’ club had non-FIU students participating in its events, said assistant director of Campus Life Ayana Wilson.

All FIU students who are enrolled in class pay Activity & Service fees that go to fund these clubs. According to Wilson, this was the first time the issue had been brought up, and it has been thoroughly addressed by Campus Life officials.

“We did address the matter with the current FIU students on the [AGA] E-board, letting them know those organizations are only for FIU students,” Wilson said. According to the FIU student handbook, the term “student” refers to any person who participates in any course or program of the University, either full-time or part-time, whether degree-seeking or non-degree seeking.

However, the handbook goes on to say that persons who are not officially enrolled at the University for a particular term but who have a continuing relationship with the University are also technically considered ‘students’; former students and alumni members fall under this category.

“It became a slight issue as far as voting rights and stuff like that is concerned,” Wilson said.

The ‘voting rights’ issue Wilson referred to is that non-FIU students, whether former students or current
New site allows clubs to catalog students efficiently

CSO, page 1

FIU alumni, cannot participate in drafting student organization legislation.

Campus Life’s official policy on student organizations states that: “Membership and all privileges, including voting and officer positions, must be extended only to all currently enrolled FIU students without regard to age, ethnicity, gender, disability, color, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation or veteran status.”

Campus Life hopes that OrgSync will be able to help them keep track of all FIU student organizations and their members in order to prevent problems like this in the future.

According to the OrgSync Web site, OrgSync offers an online community management system that centralizes campus involvement.

Once a student registers with the OrgSync Web site, they will be able to see all of the 233 student organizations listed, as well as a small description for each. They will also be able to request to join whichever organization they choose.

However, contacting some student organization officials through OrgSync may prove difficult because the majority of the clubs on OrgSync offer contact information, CSO declined to comment on whether or not this is intended or merely a case of these organizations forgetting to update their contact information.

Student Media attempted to contact several of the biggest student organizations at FIU through the OrgSync website and only heard back from one club.

“All of our membership is cataloged on OrgSync,” said Leonor Armas, president of the Yoga club.

She goes on to say that OrgSync helps her immensely because it makes mass member communication easy.

“We have over 200 members so this is a big advantage because members have to create an account to add us. This ensures that only those who are truly interested join the club and [it] gives us a better idea of how many people we can expect at events,” Armas said.

Managing all 233 student organization registrations at FIU is no easy task for Campus Life, who does not have the manpower to go through each organization individually to make sure they are all following the rules and working efficiently.

OrgSync is there to help.

“We are big fans of OrgSync; this is our first year using it, so we are trying to get the word out there,” Wilson said.

Cold front reaches record lows throughout Florida

Florida, as well as the rest of the U.S., is experiencing some of the coldest weather it has in years.

A hard freeze warning was issued by National Weather Service forecasters this week along the Gulf Coast, including most of Mississippi, Alabama and Florida Panhandle.

In central and south Florida, farmers scrambled to gather cabbages and vegetables to keep the cool temperatures from freezing them in plastic. According to The Miami Herald, Florida Gov. Charlie Crist signed an executive order Wednesday that gave the state’s Division of Emergency Management and other agencies the authority to provide farmers with assistance.

The National Weather Service cited this weather as some of the most severe cold weather South Florida has experienced in seven years, with temperatures averaging 10 to 15 degrees below normal for this time of year.

Several cities in Florida experienced record lows, including Tampa, Orlando, Daytona Beach, Fort Myers and West Palm Beach. Naples and Miami experienced temperatures that set record lows previously established.

According to The Miami Herald, this type of weather is very rare down here in South Florida, for the urban areas of Miami/Fort Lauderdale, temperatures drop to at least 35 degrees only about two to three times a decade, added the National Weather Service report.

The cold weather has forced FIU students into bundling up in order to keep warm. Some students, like international relations major Mari Tirado, feel liberated from the heat and enjoy the change of pace.

“I love this cold weather because I love wearing nice winter clothes; it’s a good change from short and sun dresses,” Tirado said.

Other students find themselves in a constant struggle to stay warm, insisting that they live in Florida for a reason, the warm weather.

“I hate the cold because I can never be warm,” said chemistry major Nicole Metalloco.
I n case you haven’t noticed, it is freezing out there! Sure, I could recommend a nice coffee shop to hang out in to beat the cold, but how boring is that? The cold just makes me want to relax in a cozy spot with good friends over a beer.

Of course, the only place to do that is at The Pub at Pembroke Gardens, 237 SW 145 Terrace, Pembroke Pines.

The central idea behind this joint, as stated on the back of the menus, is that “British pubs at their best lie at the heart of a community, whether in remote hamlets or in the rush bustle of their great cities,” and indeed they have done just that.

This is my all-time favorite pub to hang out. It’s like taking a trip to England without having to book the flight. My good friends and I used to frequent this place to the point where we are all on a first-name basis with our favorite server Leslie.

You walk in and the servers are wearing kilts. Most decide to complete their ensemble with shorts from various football teams (meaning “soccer”, in case you didn’t know) chubs.

On the walls you’ll find posters honoring bands such as The Who and The Beatles, flat-screen TV’s tuned into football games, and more sports memorabilia. A massive bar sits in the middle.

Now, when I say “bar” I am not talking about a couple of standard drinks. This thing is stocked with beer from England, Ireland and Scotland along with a few domestic beers and imports from other European countries.

The trick to drinking here is to go on a Tuesday night: $4 a pint. My favorite beer is a Hoegaarden White, and a snack bite and play a game of darts. Just bring your own darts because they don’t provide.

Another food specialty: the fried pickle. It’s 11:30 a.m. and Walter Fleming is on campus. It’s a Saturday blast. We’re blessed, and we thank God. All this energy that night and it definitely brought out the best in us,” Fleming said.

Fleming and Phanord, drummer Chauncey “Smith ‘Q’ Keyz,” came in that [conversation] started out about piano and music in general but then we found another common bond in our Christian faith,” Fleming said.

At that meeting, another friend, Quintel Smith, aka “Smith ‘Q’ Keyz,” came in and the three formed SOL.

“We’ll take a Beatles song and add some saxophone and turntable scratching… We’ll like to mix all kinds of music,” Fleming said.

While playing piano in the Graham Center Piano Room at the Modesto Maidique Campus.

“We’ll take a Beatles song, and add some saxophone and turntable scratching… We like to mix all kinds of music.” — Walter Fleming, keyboardist SOL

“We'll take a Beatles song, and add some saxophone and turntable scratching... We like to mix all kinds of music. — Walter Fleming, keyboardist SOL

The band performs with saxophone player Sean “Slap” Smith, keyboardists Fleming and Phanord, drummer Chauncey Riley, and guitarist Keba Williams, all FIU students. Fleming, Phanord, and Keyz also alternate playing the bass.

SOL classifies themselves as a cover band, performing everything from top 40 to reggae. That versatility only enhances the band, according to Fleming.

“When you see in class. It was a great amount of energy that night and it definitely brought out the best in us,” Fleming said.

As the Spring semester begins, SOL’s popularity has increased. Fleming said. Venues they have appeared at include Sunset Plaza, FIU, Miami-Dade College, Broward College, Coconut Grove and South Beach.

While a record deal is their ultimate goal, SOL is content with their current status.

“We love being at FIU, having met here and playing around South Florida; it’s a blast. We’re blessed, and we thank God. We’re having a lot of fun,” Fleming said.

PHILIPPE BUTEAU/THE BEACON

ABOVE: Athena Obregon, freshman hospitality major, had her face painted on Jan. 5 during the Blue and Gold Breakfast, sponsored by Campus Life and Orientation. BELOW: Sofia Robinson, a faculty member in Multicultural Programs has her face painted on Jan. 5, at Blue and Gold Breakfast.
Revision to Bright Futures necessary, will teach lessons

DAVID A. BARRIOS
Opinion Editor

Thousands of students were presented with an early Christmas present during last winter break: a bill from Florida Bright Futures for classes they had dropped from their schedule months before. The Sun Sentinel reported Jan. 3 that revisions have been made in the Bright Futures program, forcing students who chose to drop classes after the add/drop period to pay for them in full.

The revisions, made during the 2009 state legislative session, are part of a wholly necessary revamp of the program. This shift also has unforeseen positive aspects.

Initial student reactions, of course, have been unfavorable to the changes. “It’s like you’re being forced to fail. If you withdraw after drop/add, you’ve got to pay the money back. If you stay in the class, you may get a bad grade that will hurt your GPA,” said Boris Bastidas, a sophomore at Florida Atlantic University to The Sun Sentinel.

Such numbers into perspective, a credit hour for undergraduate students at FIU is $142.05, making a typical three-credit class cost about $426.50, along with fees. It is a new burden to these students who were free to experiment with classes without any penalty, even after the drop/add period.

The Bright Futures program is first and foremost a merit-based scholarship based on academic performance throughout high school. As with any scholarship, responsibility must be put on the student.

Dropping a class should always be the final option for a student. For those students who have Bright Futures, dropping a class carries no consequences.

Essentially, the program was a parachute for mediocrity. Students’ GPAs would be safe and their pockets untouched.

Bright Futures recipients will now be exposed to the students pay who out of pocket face when making the tough decision to drop. Students will also need to be more selective and judicious in their class choices. It will also push students to work harder in their classes to ensure they’re not forced to make such a decision; potentially enhancing academic achievement among students.

The state of Florida is currently in a multi-billion dollar budget deficit. This move is expected to bring in over $32 million tuition dollars that were lost; it is good business in the midst of a financial crisis.

It is also highly unfair to ask the taxpayers to foot the bill for a student’s scholastic snafu.

The Bright Future’s reform could also enhance state schools’ standings and their reputations.

Since the revisions made in the fall of 2009, the number of students dropping classes within state universities has dropped significantly. According to The Sentinel, the drop rate fell by over 13 percent at FIU.

At FAU and the University of Florida, the drop rates fell by 22 and 32 percent respectively. The U.S. News and World Report releases its highly respected list of college ranking annually. Among the items that determine a college’s ranking on the list is the amount of time a student takes within the school to finish a program.

The lower the drop rate, the less chance a student will stay in a university for more than four years while trying to complete a four-year bachelor’s program which could help improve the university’s reputation standings, something I’m sure the administration is happy to see. According to The Education Trust, the six-year graduation rate for students looking for a four-year degree is 49 percent at FIU.

This move will cause less harm than anticipated. It’s a matter of adapting to harsh economic times and re-examining a flawed system.

It will teach students something necessary – responsibility as citizens.

Prejudice against food stamp recipients unjustified

ODETTE BARRIENTOS
Asst. Opinion Editor

After years of the government’s attempts to erase the stigma behind food stamp programs, it is evident that ignorance is hard to overcome.

There are those who look at government assistance programs with disdain, categorizing them as programs for the lazy and as “failed programs” with disdain, categorizing them as programs for the lazy and as “failed programs.” Instead of placing judgment on the needy families of America, those who consider this assistance unnecessary, or a “burden to taxpayers,” should ask themselves what they would do if they could not provide for their own.

Due to the recession, food stamp use is at a record high and it continues to grow every day. Today, more than 36 million people use food stamps to buy groceries, according to figures from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The program now feeds one in eight Americans and nearly one in four children.

The food stamp program, or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, helps low-income families buy food for their families. The main purpose of the program, however, is rapidly changing. What was once used to give but a mere financial boost has become the only source of income for a lot of families.

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What was once used to give but a mere financial boost has become the only source of income for a lot of families. According to The New York Times, “the richest counties are often where aid is growing fastest, although from a small base. In 2007, Forsyth County outside Atlanta, had the highest household income in the South. Food stamp use there has more than doubled.”

Food stamp use has also doubled in Warren County, the second-richest in Ohio – a county that has previously held strong resistance toward government aid.

While the dependence on government assistance programs, such as SNAP, has increased, it seems like some politicians make it their goal to complicate things. Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation, a well-known conservative organization, argues that food stamps should have strict work requirements similar to those placed on cash assistance.

How would one fulfill these requirements with unemployment on the rise? I’m almost positive that he hasn’t been job-hunting lately.

The increase in food stamp recipients isn’t just a product of laziness. It’s a product of a recession and a struggling economy. While I’m sure that abuse and misuse of the system do exist, you can’t demolish an entire program that feeds millions because of certain individuals. At any rate, the stigma behind government assistance programs should have died a long time ago. It is the wealthy people who criticized them once upon a time that are justifying it now because they have found themselves in vulnerable, needy positions. Even then, the program doesn’t reach the numbers it’s supposed to.

Nationwide, food stamps reach about two-thirds of those eligible and it is estimated that there are another 16 million who are eligible for help and they probably don’t even know it. I have a job and it’s hard for me to make ends meet; I can only imagine what an unemployed parent must feel like.
Making over Miami's art scene

Miami International Art Fair helps put art in South Florida center stage

ASHLYN TOLEDO
Life! Editor

The Miami Beach Convention Center is playing host to the reincarnation of Art Miami – the Miami International Art Fair. After much demand from local art dealers, David and Lee Ann Lester, founders of Art Miami and founding organizers of MIA, have worked to bring an international art fair to Miami in January. They are hoping to fill the void left by Art Miami, which was moved to December to coincide with Art Basel after the couple sold it.

This year, because Argentina is celebrating its bicentennial, MIA will feature a special exhibit called “Focus: Argentina,” which brings the largest exhibition of Argentine art to the United States. Other special exhibits include “Next Generation,” a pavilion of galleries curated by young, up-and-coming artists, and an installation by Colombian artist Federico Uribe titled “Risk” which will feature pieces from his “Human Nature” exhibit as well as new pieces that will be displayed at the Shanghai Biennale later this year.

In addition to the special exhibits, there will be a lecture series featuring experts in Latin American and contemporary art including a conversation between Mark Millloff, painter and dean of the Rhode Island School of Design, and Uribe which is scheduled for 3:30 p.m. on Jan. 8.

In conjunction with the “Focus: Argentina” exhibit, a lecture called “The Development of Contemporary Art in Argentina 1970” will be given on Jan. 9 at 4:45 p.m. in Spanish, and then on Jan. 10 at 4:30 p.m. in English. The lecture will be a discussion of the development of the arts in Argentina.

Lee Ann Lester hopes that this event will attract attention from all parts of the globe to help grow the Miami art scene.

“On View” series displayed in the Patria Gallery, who hopes the fair will bring him business.

“We hope this Fair will help establish Miami as a year-round arts venue, not just during December,” she said.

Participating in the event is Stefano Campanini, owner of Etra Fine Art Gallery, who hopes the fair will bring him business.

“I hope to get more visibility in the Miami market,” he said.

The fair, which began with a preview night on Jan. 6, is open until Jan. 10 and marks the beginning of the international art fair season. Fair hours are 12 p.m. - 9 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and 12 p.m. - 8 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets are available at the door of the convention center, located at 1901 Convention Center Dr., Miami Beach, Fl. 33139, and costs $15 for a one day pass or $20 for a multi-day pass. For more information regarding the events and exhibits at the fair, visit their Web site or call (239) 498-1683.

Some menu items kept under wraps at popular local chains

LEONCIO ALVAREZ
Staff Writer

Restaurants and food spots all around Miami might have more to offer than what their menus read.

Some locations which you have been visiting for years have secret items available only for those who know about them and dare the possible embarrassment at the head of the line.

These surprising additions will entice you to change it up with more variety than your everyday latte at Starbucks and turkey sub at Subway.

If a tall-sized drink is still too big for you, just order a short. It’s way smaller but it gets the job done for less the pocket change.

Most Starbucks stores have different items available at specific stores. For example, the Starbucks on 8 Street and 142 Avenue has a Captain Crunch-flavored frappuccino that only the in-crowd knows about.

An orange creamsicle inspired concoction is also a rumored favorite at other locations.

Baristas usually don’t like to say no to customers so if it doesn’t affect the blender in some way, they can blend it.

Every syrup flavor is available as a blended beverage with either a coffee or cream base, even if the menu doesn’t say so.

MCDONALD’S

Biscuits and gravy is a favorite dish for those who like southern cooking. Little do they know, during breakfast hours, it can be ordered at their favorite yellow arch.

All they have to do is ask. There was no problem ordering it at the McDonald’s on Flagler and 77 Avenue.

A poor man’s Big Mac is an option for those who don’t want to pay full price for their favorite sandwich as well.

Just order a double cheeseburger with onions, lettuce, tomato and the infamous Big Mac sauce on the side; those are all extras that McDonald’s should not charge extra for.

A Neapolitan milkshake is also a delicious secret that has been kept hidden for far too long.

JAMBA JUICE

Jamba Juice already has an assortment of yummy drinks that quench your need for a brain freeze.

But what many don’t know is that an entire secret menu is up for grabs at this trendy juice spot.

Due to name infringement the names of the drinks cannot be published on the menu, but that doesn’t stop some students...
Secrets abound at your favorite food spots

SECRETS, page 5
from changing up their orders once in a while.

“I know about a ‘White Gummy Bear’ drink that really tastes like a gummy bear,” said Jacklyn Tricas, a senior and art history major. “It is so good and they make it for me every time. Don’t be scared to order it. They won’t think you’re crazy.”

After some asking around, it was discovered that a white and red variation of that drink is available at the Jamba Juice in the Graham Center as well as a “Pink Starburts.”

At the International Mall store a very tasty key lime pie rendition is just a question away. All cashiers have a different list of the secret menu items for sale at each store, just ask them for it and they will gladly serve you up a totally different drink than the guy behind you.

Drinks vary by store, so once you discover a tasty one, remember where you got it. Jamba Juice is also known for bringing back past favorites onto the menu for a limited time so keep your eye out for the “Wake up and Mango.”

WENDY’S
Excess is essential for Americans, go ahead! Dave knew exactly what was his favorite patriots.

That’s why at some Wendy’s there exists such a thing as a “Grand Slam” behind closed doors. Don’t expect bacon and eggs here, this slam consists of four patties in between those buns. If you tell the cashier exactly what it is you want there shouldn’t be a problem getting it.

SUBWAY AND CHIPOTLE
In the ’90s, before Jared made his way into our lives as the face of Chipotle, a Mexican food chain, actually has a policy that as long as the ingredients are there, they can make it for you.

This includes quesadillas and nachos. Again, if you have the nerve to ask for it, they can probably make it happen.

“At other places, like Taco Bell or Moe’s, they charge you extra for additions to your food. At Chipotle, we like to make sure you’re eating what you want,” said David Bemudes, a Chipotle employee.

So as you can see, even places that were childhood favorites have been serving up changes for your taste buds all along.

Some places definitely have secret items, but personalized orders on orders can really go as far as you take it.

Just don’t go asking for baked beans and churrasco at Burger King, that’s just crazy.

LAST CHANCE

“The Missing Piece: Artists Consider the Dalai Lama” will be closing this week on his fellowship at Push Square.

FRIDAY, JAN. 8

MIAMI CITY BALLET
WHERE: 2826 N. Miami Ave.
WHEN: 7 p.m.
HOW MUCH: $10
WHERE: Ziff Ballet Opera House

THE SQUARE EGG
WHERE: Revolution Live
WHEN: 9 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Free
WHERE: GE Theatre

LAUGHING GAS
WHERE: Intersection
WHEN: 10 p.m.
HOW MUCH: $10
WHERE: Main Street Playhouse

SATURDAY, JAN. 9

LIL DAGGERS
WHERE: Miami Beach
WHEN: 8 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Free
WHERE: Art Center

EREMIS LAGASSÉ
WHERE: 2826 N. Miami Ave.
WHEN: 7 p.m.
HOW MUCH: $20
WHERE: Adrienne Armit Center

GUS TAVO ROMAN
WHERE: Ziff Ballet Opera House
WHEN: 8 p.m.
HOW MUCH: $25
WHERE: Adrienne Armit Center

SUNDAY, JAN. 10

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
WHERE: Miami Beach
WHEN: 7 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Free
WHERE: Handel Foundation

BEAUX ARTS FESTIVAL
WHERE: Miami Beach
WHEN: 5 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Free
WHERE: Miami Beach Convention Center

ACOUSTIC NIGHTS
WHERE: Revolution Live
WHEN: 9 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Free
WHERE: Ziff Ballet Opera House

“Fistfuls of Tech is an occasional feature that highlights new and emerging technologies.”

JUDGE VALUES

“…the good kind of crazy.”

Sudoku answers from 1/6/10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1
3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 2
4 5 6 7 8 9 1 2 3
5 6 7 8 9 1 2 3 4
6 7 8 9 1 2 3 4 5
7 8 9 1 2 3 4 5 6
8 9 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
before escaping with a one point win at the U.S. Century Bank Arena later in the season.

In the one-point loss, FIU dominated from beyond the arc shooting 47.8 percent, but Troy held an advantage at the free-throw line as they hit 19 of their 28 shots compared to 8 of 13 for the Golden Panthers.

The team’s three point shooting has continued to be a threat this season knocking down about 6.5 treys per game.

However, the team’s field goal percentage has dropped into the low 20’s in recent losses.

HAMPERED

Head coach Cindy Russo’s roster has been decimated by injuries, compounding the recent shooting woes.

The most recent loss is Rakia Rodgers who will be out 4-6 weeks with an MCL sprain in her knee.

Rodgers, who was averaging 15.5 points, faced the injury in her fourth game back, after sitting out the first nine of the season due to NCAA transfer regulations.

Freshman Erin Knight, who has yet to make her debut as a Golden Panther, will continue to sit out as she has been dealing with an injured back since the summer.

Meanwhile, Marquita Adley plans to play after returning from a shoulder injury just a few games ago.

The senior’s minutes, however, could be limited due to her history of injuries in past seasons.

“We continue to be frustrated with our injury situation and we can’t get a break,” said Russo in a previous interview.

Although she agrees injuries can be a set back, senior Ashley Traugott won’t blame the team’s play entirely on that.

“Honestly, the biggest struggle right now is field goal percentage. We are not shooting very well at all and that contributes to our previous losses,” said Traugott.

“We’ve had a lot of injuries but I personally would never blame a loss on an injury.”

GETTING DEFENSIVE

Something the whole team can agree on is an improvement on the defensive end.

Center Maja Krajacic has been a solid inside presence for FIU averaging 2.5 blocks a game.

The junior currently leads the SBC in blocked shots and ranks 18th in the nation.

“Since my freshman year I have been learning from my older teammates. I have always looked at them to improve,” said Krajacic.

Krajacic and Carey recently put on of the most impressive defensive efforts in FIU basketball history by combining for 16 blocked shots against Bryant just last month to set a new school record for most shots rejected in a single game.

“[Maja] is a huge presence in the paint, anyone who drives her way, she’s going to send them away,” said Traugott. “If I were playing against [Maja and Elisa] I would probably not drive in towards their way.”

Thomas’s bench is providing not only points but excitement to the team as well.

Thomas told fiusports.com that Steven Miro provided much needed spark to the South Alabama game.

Even though FIU lost the game, Miro and Thomas were both bringing intensity to start heading into conference play.

Prior to the South Alabama game, Thomas rarely ever got up from his seat and had not shown much emotion during previous home games.

During the South Alabama game, he was up and down the court, yelling at his team to stop talking to the officials and even yelling at the officials themselves.

Thomas stated in the post-game interview that he was simply getting his team ready for conference play.

Phil Gary Jr. finished by stating that there still isn’t enough spark on the team, and that the team needs to show more consistency to contend this season.

![Junior point guard Michelle Gonzalez will look to lead the Golden Panthers past Troy this Saturday for their eighth win of the season.](image)

**FIU Payment Plan**

**What is the FIU Payment Plan?**

The FIU Payment Plan will allow students to pay their tuition and fees for the term in two installments.

**When will the Payment Plan be available?**

Available for the spring 2010 Term.

**How much time do I get to pay my tuition?**

50% of the total tuition and fees are due on the Last Day to Pay, the balance is due by the end of the seventh week of the term.

**Is there a late payment fee if I enroll in the Plan?**

No, as long as the two installment payments are made by the due dates, you will not be charged a late fee.

**Is there a cost to enrolling in the Plan?**

Yes, There is a $15 service charge each term that you enroll.

**How do I enroll in the Plan?**

By going to the MyFIU portal (https://my.fiu.edu) and selecting “Payment plan” in the Finances Section.

**Where can I get more information?**

- Visit the Student Financials offices, located at MMC, PC 120 and BBC, ACI 140.
- E-mail: stuffian@fiu.edu or Phone: (305) 348-2126
FIU offensive coordinator Bill Legg will not return next season after deciding to take the same gig at Marshall University.

Legg, who called the plays for the Golden Panthers the last two seasons, will return to the Thundering Herd after a stint on their staff from 2001-02.

Under Legg’s direction, the Golden Panthers slightly improved offensively as they went from being second to last out of 120 in the Football Bowl Subdivision in total offense to finishing 96th in 2009.

In 2009, however, FIU did not progress but fell all the way to 119th this season.

The Golden Panthers ranked 71st in total defense in 2008 allowed 35.3 points per game. The Golden Panthers ranked 71st in total defense in 2008 but fell all the way to 119th this season.

The Golden Panthers defense suffered a myriad of injuries last season as well, which played a role in the team’s decline. Galiano will not return after being behind the Golden Panther defense for three seasons, and coaching on the same staff as Cristobal dating back to Rutgers early last decade.

No announcements have been made as to who the replacements will be at either coordinators.

FIU MEN VS TROY @ 8 P.M., JAN. 9

Team looks to limit turnovers on key homestand

JOEY CRUZ
Staff Writer

Starting point guard Phil Gary Jr. has brought defensive quickness and scoring capability to his team this season, but he has also brought 42 turnovers to his new group.

“We’ve got to stop losing the ball on our own,” Gary Jr. said “Most of the turnovers have been due to miscommunication.”

One of FIU’s key struggles this season has been turning the basketball over. This season, the Golden Panthers have a whopping 235 turnovers, averaging 13.8 a game.

The Golden Panthers make up for the giveaways, however, by leading the Sun-Belt conference in steals.

Gary Jr. would still like to see himself and his team be more careful with the ball.

“Coach tells us in practice to put up shots when facing a turnover situation,” Gary Jr. said “If we shoot the ball, even if it’s a bad shot there’s still a chance for a rebound unlike a turnover where the other team automatically gets the ball back.”

Against SBC contender South Alabama on Dec. 31, FIU gave up 26 points off turnovers.

Point guard Nick Taylor has only played in six games this season after starting most of last season in place of an injured Josue Soto. Taylor was third in the Sun-Belt conference last season in the turnover ratio category with at 2.15. In 2008-09, he was also 11th in the conference in assist with 99.

Taylor was injured earlier this season, but is now healthy and could be an option to do some of the ball-handling.

If we shoot the ball, even if it’s a bad shot there’s still a chance for a rebound, unlike a turnover.

EFFICIENCY

When Nikola Gacesa was sidelined with a knee injury, and center Cedric Essola has remained banged up, Thomas was forced to move Marlon Bright and J.C. Otero down to the center and power forward positions. Bright is shooting an impressive 52 percent from the floor.

“Marlon is our team leader,” Gary Jr. said “In the current position he’s in, we can’t ask him for much more.”

In a preseason media conference, Thomas could not give a description of Otero’s style of play because he did not get a chance to see him on film, since the senior forward was sidelined with a serious knee injury.

This season he has proven to Thomas that he is back and healthy while leading the team in blocks with 11 and shooting 46 percent from the field.