

SUNBLAZERS

NEWSLETTER

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Women's Basketball: An Excellent Season

With the abatement of the shock of having its season suddenly end, the Florida International University women's basketball team is preparing for next season, its initial venture in NCAA Division I competition.

FIU had an excellent year in 1985-86, winning 26 games, losing just two, and setting numerous school records in the process. The Sunblazers posted an all-time best winning percentage of .929. Head Coach Cindy Russo's winning percentage for seven seasons here is now .663 (124-63). In her last five years at FIU, the Sunblazers have won 109 of 144 games, a .757 percentage.

"I think the past season was just unbelievable," Russo said. "I don't think that many coaches in the United States experienced the kind of season I did. We worked hard, and deserved the season we had."

FIU showed early that it had an excellent team, and the Sunblazers continued success was no mystery to Russo. "I wasn't surprised that we did so well," Russo said. "I knew that we were a good team. We showed a lot of character and determination."

Several Sunblazers had outstanding years, and just about everyone on the 14-player roster contributed, including nine who saw action regularly.

Senior Lynette Richardson was named to the Kodak All-District team. She became only the third women's college basketball player in the state of Florida to score more than 2,000 points in a career when she tallied 35 points against Edward Waters College last February 7. Richardson finished the year with 2,114 points, just 19 away from the official Division II record. In addition, she owns or shares 19 Sunblazer records, having rewritten much of the FIU record book during her four-year career here.

Richardson, a 5-foot-9 senior from Tampa, is not the only Sunblazer who has played college basketball for the last time. Also graduating is 6-foot reserve center Lillie Young from Greenville, SC (8.9 points, 6.2 rebounds), whose quickness was evident as she was second in steals with 64.

Starting center Lisa Vines of Gadsden, AL (8.1, 5.3), whose voice is heard singing the national anthem before almost every FIU athletic event, starting forward Korey Kruse from Maquoketa, IA (2.6, 3.0) and reserve center/forward Renae Siplin from Orlando (3.8, 5.5) will also be missed.

The Sunblazers will have an excellent nucleus of returning players to count on for the 1986-87 season. All-America candidate Teresa Baker, who was FIU's most dominant player inside, heads a corps of returning players. Baker averaged 13.7 points and 5.8 rebounds this past year. She'll be joined by her cousin, forward/guard Sandra Bogan, who is one of the Sunblazers best weapons against the zone defense. Bogan's outside shooting talents resulted in a 9.9 scoring average this year, third best on the team. Juniors Angela Hill and Janet Hollack, and sophomore Jenifer Davies return at guard.

Russo and assistant Larry Rosenberg will hope to add the last few pieces to the FIU machine so it can start off in precision working order



Streamers descend upon Sunblazer Arena as FIU scores for the first time on opening night, February 1. A complete page on the gymnasium opening is on page three.

when the season begins anew next November. The Sunblazers staff has the ability to sell the team's new Division I affiliation to potential recruits for the very first time.

"We're recruiting hard, and we've got a good group already on board," said Russo. "We're really looking forward to playing Division I this fall. It's another challenge for us, and it will give us another goal. I think everyone who wants to be successful also wants to compete in the top division. We're no different."

FIU's 1985-86 opponents would be well advised to be on guard if Russo and Rosenberg have another banner recruiting year. Baker, Bogan, Hill and promising freshmen Jean Taylor and Denise Vangates formed a bumper crop of recruits last season. The Sunblazers playoff berth this year was their first in four years, and a post-season spot in either the NCAAs or the Women's National Invitational Tournament isn't something anyone is counting on in 1986-87. But if anyone can pull off such a feat, it would be the Sunblazers.

Men's Basketball Moves Onward and Upward

Despite posting a 17-9 record, winning their last eight regular season games and 13 of the last 15, the telephone call from the NCAA inviting Coach Rich Walker and his Sunblazers men's basketball team to post-season tournament competition never materialized.

"Of course I was disappointed," said Walker. But at the same time, he couldn't help but smile while reminiscing about all the positive accomplishments that took place during the course of the University's fifth and final season playing Division II basketball.

The biggest event of the season, if not in the entire history of the program, took place on Saturday evening, February 1. The record book might only show a 75-60 victory over Nova University, but much more than that, it marked the long awaited opening of Sunblazer Arena-FIU's new fieldhouse located on the Tamiami Campus.

The largest crowd ever to witness a Sunblazers home athletic event was on hand that evening. What they saw was a vision of what hopefully lies ahead for intercollegiate basketball at Florida International. Some 2,000 partisans cheered and screamed and, at least for one night this season, turned the University into a major college basketball hotbed.

"What I remember most about that night was the tremendous sense of enthusiasm we all enjoyed and the fulfillment it brought to so many people, not only the players and coaches, but also to the University administration, our students and fans," said Walker. "We finally have a home that we can now call our very own."

Leading the 1985-86 squad was senior forward Patrick McDonald, touted as the Sunblazers first legitimate All-American candidate. Despite a shoulder separation during the second game of the season, McDonald came back after missing just one game to finish with a team-leading 15.6 points per game average. He was also second on the squad with 8.4 rebounds per game and scored in double figures during each of the last 20 games.

McDonald ended his four-year collegiate career as the University's all-time leading scorer (1,515 points) and owner of 12 other school records including most career rebounds (875), assists (256) and steals (147).

"I think Patrick performed as a true All-American," said Coach Walker. "He gave everything he had every time he stepped on the court. Many times, he made sacrifices in order to help get his teammates going. Regardless of whether or not outsiders recognize him for his talents, in our eyes, Patrick was a true All-American in this program."

But this year's team was more than just McDonald. Senior Hector "Chief" Rodriguez was a dominating force in the middle. Playing the best ball of his career, Rodriguez had two games with 16 rebounds, then two more with a school record of 17 boards. His overall total of 251 rebounds in 1985-86 set a new University season mark as did his 41 blocked shots.

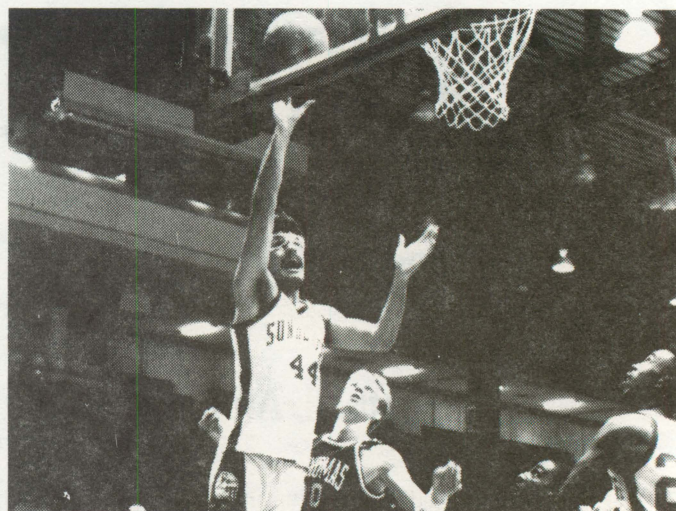
Bright Comes on Strong

Golfer Dave Bright was tired of playing poorly and making excuses. So he decided to do something about it. The results are obvious, and he's the Sunblazers most improved golfer this spring semester.

After struggling in the fall, he's come on strong in the spring, finishing third in the FIU Sunshine Classic and tying for eighth place at the University of South Florida Invitational.

The junior from Zephyrhills, Florida said an adjustment made in his practice habits has really paid off in tournament play. "I was playing conscious golf," Bright said. "I was worried about my swing, and I couldn't go out and play. I did some drills to work on my pivot and tried to relax over the ball. Now, I'm playing subconscious golf, playing without worrying about my swing."

Bright is in his first year at Florida International after spending two years at Middle Tennessee State University. He said that the Sunblazer



Sunblazer Hector Rodriguez (44) scores against St. Thomas University as teammate Patrick McDonald looks on.

Senior Andre Laz was another steady performer and a team leader at the forward position. He finished just behind McDonald and Rodriguez in scoring (9.6) and contributed 4.7 rebounds per game. Laz also became an FIU basketball trivia answer when he who scored the very first basket in Sunblazer Arena.

In addition to the play of the senior tri-captains, freshmen guards Gus de Ribeaux and Elvis Lopez showed steady improvement as the season progressed.

After a somewhat disappointing start, the team came together just prior to the Christmas break. The team won 13 of its last 15 and two of the last four losses were by a single point (to NCAA Division I tournament participant Drexel University and Division II final four participant Cheyney University). The two other losses were both two-point defeats. The eight wins in a row that ended the regular season established a new school record and the five wins against no defeats at Sunblazer Arena offered a true home court advantage to FIU.

And what lies ahead for this program? Director of Athletics Dave Rice plans to submit Division I schedules for the next two seasons to the NCAA on June 1, 1986, thus informing the Association of the University's intentions of moving up divisionally beginning next year.

"Division I is a natural progression for our University," said Coach Walker. "I think FIU wants to be in a position to receive recognition through its intercollegiate athletic program. It wants to take its place along with the best institutions in America. And, it appears that most of the elements are now in place for such a move."

If all goes as planned, look for the Sunblazers to take even greater strides in the area of intercollegiate athletics in general and the sport of basketball in particular during the coming years.

coaching staff has really helped him progress. "Coach (Head Coach Bobby Shave), Kenny (Women's Coach Ken Juhn) and Bill (Assistant Coach Mehlhorn) have helped me understand what I have to do. Coach has drilled percentage golf into my head. If I miss a shot, it's always going to be where I can still salvage par."

Shave is pleased with Bright's improvement, and would like to see him keep getting better. "Dave has made some positive improvements. He's changed the way he moves so now it's more natural. What he's done has really started to pay off," said Shave.

Bright, Randy Green and Andy Kissick will form a strong nucleus of seniors next fall, as the Sunblazers begin competition in Division I. "With the seniors we have coming back, and with our younger players improving, we have a chance to go to nationals next spring," said Bright. "The three of us need to lead the way."

If all goes right, the men's golf team could have a banner year in its initial year of major college play.

Sanders Shoots For All-America Status

Woman golfer Shelley Sanders is trying to kill two birds with one stone this spring.

She would like to be recognized as an All-American, and she wants to see the Sunblazers compete in the NCAA National Tournament at Ohio State next month. Sanders is trying to parlay individual heroics and team success so that both goals can be met.

In 1984-85, Sanders averaged 77 strokes per round. This year, she's knocked half a shot off her average, and has top ten finishes in five of the eight tournaments in which she's played.

Sanders said that her adjustment this year is mostly mental. "I did a lot of reading, research and soul-searching over the summer, knowing that I only had two years left in school. I had to try to go all out," said the junior from Sharon, PA. "I read books on psychocybernetics, self-motivation and the subconscious mind. They helped me think better, on and off the golf course. What the mind believes, the body achieves."

Head Coach Ken Juhn echoed his golfer's sentiments, and added a few superlatives of his own. "Shelley has a great attitude," he said. "She seldom shows emotion on the golf course, and it's hard to tell from her expression whether she's had a good day, or a bad one. She's very serious when she's on the course, but she can leave it behind and still enjoy herself when she's not playing golf."

Sanders has come a long way since almost missing her high school graduation. She was qualifying for a tournament, and had to go right from the golf course to the graduation ceremony an hour's drive away. She got there just in time to receive her diploma.

Sanders finished fourth in the Sunblazers first tournament of the year, the Lady Seminole at Florida State, and has continued to do well. "I hurt my ankle, and was thinking maybe I shouldn't have played," said Sanders. "But reading those books helped me get into the proper frame of mind, and I played and did well. If I hadn't started off as well as I did, I don't know whether or not I'd be having this good a year."

By traveling extensively, Sanders feels that she has gained the advantage of being able to handle unusual situations, and that has aided her overall development. "Shelley has developed skills that will enable her to handle most any situation on the golf course," said Juhn. "She's definitely become one of our team leaders."

The Sunblazers have been moving upward since they were ranked 18th in the computer rankings of teams across the nation in February. A successful showing at the end of the season would seem to be all they would need to earn a berth in the NCAA Nationals, and give Sanders a chance at All-America honors. It might just be the best of both worlds.



Rice Stresses Academics, Commitment to Student-Athletes

Director of Intercollegiate Athletics Dave Rice is sending out a message to the parents of all prospective student-athletes who might attend FIU: "We Care." Since coming south last September from Fordham University, Rice and his administrative staff have worked at helping all present and future athletes get their degrees.

Rice was spoiled during his tenure at the Bronx, NY campus, proudly pointing out the fact that over the last six years, all recruited athletes at Fordham graduated. Now, he's trying to implement programs and procedures at FIU that will duplicate that accomplishment.

The first thing on the agenda is the hiring of an administrative assistant who will be charged with all academic affairs.

"I'm looking for a person who can deal with people on a professional basis. Someone who views the athlete as a very important person, not someone who will be sitting in front of a computer all day," said Rice.

Another advance that will be implemented will be a departmental study hall for all athletes whose grade point average falls below a certain level. In addition, all new students, whether they be freshmen or junior college transfers, will be expected to participate in this program until they prove they can handle the educational rigors of FIU.

An orientation will be held prior to each academic year in order to acquaint all new student-athletes with the many resources available to all students on both campuses.

Another program improvement that Rice seems most pleased about is the preregistration procedure that will be installed for the Fall Semester of 1986. "I evaluate a well run preregistration as the foundation for having any kind of academic credibility," said Rice. "If you aren't in the right classes, not only won't you be able to properly balance your time between classes and practice, but you'll also never be able to graduate."

With an eye toward graduation, Rice has directed all coaches awarding tuition scholarships to urge athletes to take 15 credit hours per semester, and a total of 30 for the academic year. In the past, 12 hours had been accepted as a full load but under that assumption, an athlete couldn't graduate in a four-year period and there was more margin for error with regards to academic guidelines set down by the NCAA.

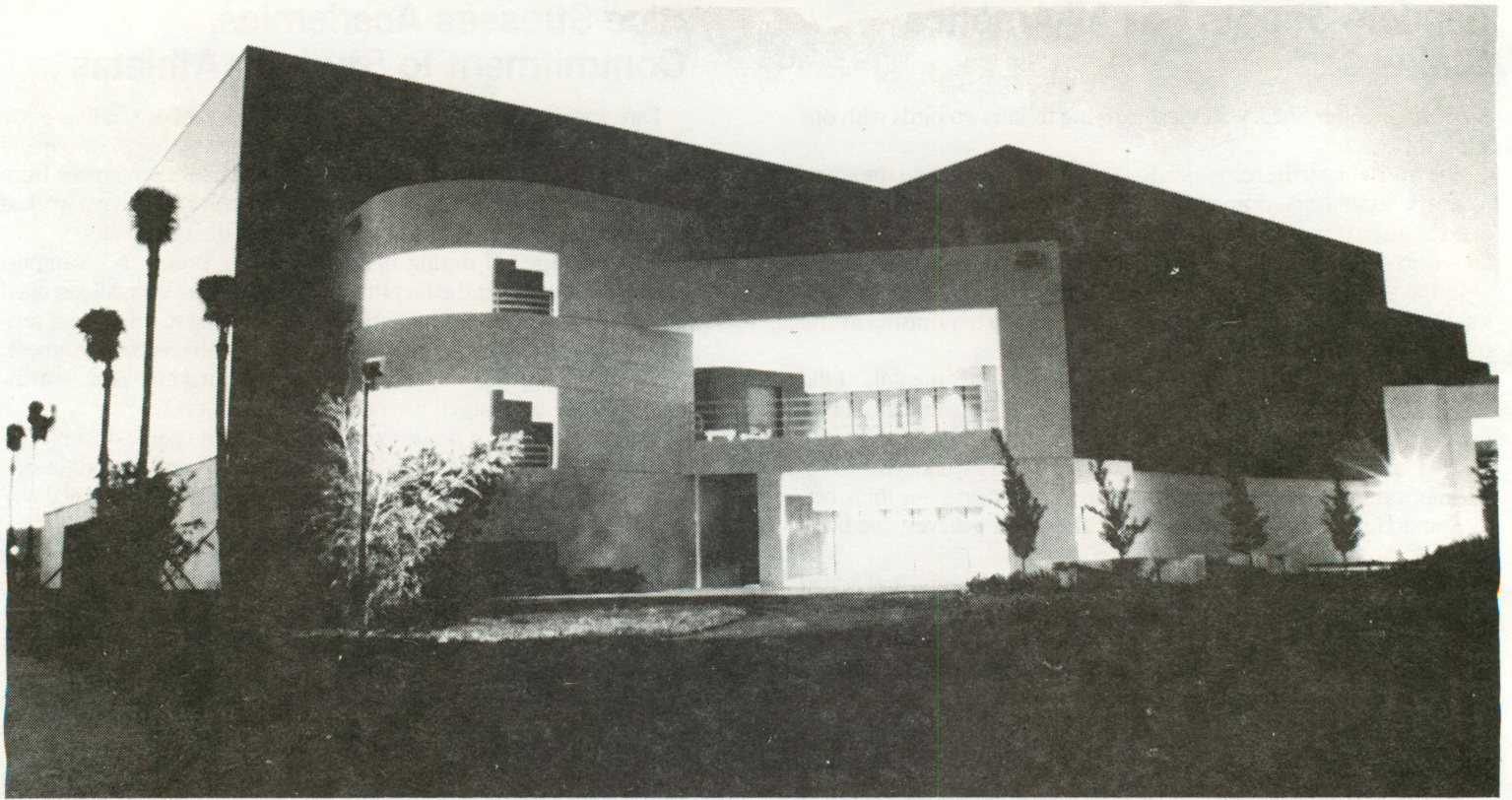
"An athlete goes through four years of college. He realizes he still has another year to go before he's eligible to graduate. He has no money. His sports eligibility has been used up so his incentive is gone. It's too easy for that particular student-athlete just to drop out of school," Rice reasoned.

"We're going to give that athlete a greater commitment as far as graduation is concerned. If a student-athlete serves this University for four years, then I think we have an obligation to do all we can to help that person graduate."

Everyone admits that Florida International has the most stringent admission and academic policies of any of the nine state universities in Florida. But Rice believes it can be just as successful on the athletic front.

"Not everyone may have a good academic background entering college but if a person has a particular talent, whether it be in athletics or in piano, why not offer the opportunity for academic success if we can. If we see something in an athlete's background that makes us think he or she can be successful with the proper academic support, why not do everything in your power to give that person the opportunity to succeed both athletically and academically."

Alumnus Mike Hernandez, Athletics Director Dave Rice and Mr. Osvaldo Vento, Sr. at the first annual Sunblazers Ball, January 31, at the home of Mr. Vento. Through this annual fund raising event, that was fully underwritten by Mr. Vento, the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics realized funds to be used for the betterment of the program. 'This is a giant step forward for FIU because these are local people getting involved,' said Rice.



Sunblazer Arena Gives FIU a Winning Edge

More than 2,000 exuberant fans were in attendance on Saturday, February 1 as Sunblazer Arena made its long-awaited debut.

Dedication ceremonies were held, and the Sunblazer men's basketball team made it a successful evening by defeating Nova University, 75-60.

The arena seats 3,600 with plans for expansion to a capacity of 5,039 in the near future.

The floor is a class triple-A wooden floor, according to Director of Physical Planning Dan D'Oliveira. Scoreboards are located at each

end of the main gym, and four backboards along the sides allow the floor to be divided into two practice courts. Portable baskets are used at either end of the main floor for intercollegiate games.

The second level has a multipurpose area and an auxiliary gym. Support areas on the first floor include an equipment room, training room and 876 lockers in six locker rooms serving students, faculty and staff. There are also two four-wall racquetball courts for recreational and tournament use.

Academic space includes three classrooms, one of which will be utilized as a press room during home basketball games, and a physiology and kinesiology laboratory. The arena also serves as the new home of the Physical Education and Athletics Department staffs.

Lamothe, Kelly Standouts For Tennis Teams

If the Sunblazers men's and women's tennis programs are to have any kind of success in post-season competition, to a large extent it will probably be attributed to senior Ruben Lamothe and junior Kathy Kelly.

It's been a tale of two seasons for Kelly. After winning just one of her first nine matches, the Westlake, Ohio native has come on to win nine of the last ten.

A transfer from the University of Houston, Kelly admits that this season has mostly been a learning process. "I'm really just learning how to play this year," she said. "(Head Coach) Mark (Mason) has helped me a lot. In the beginning, I had to learn to keep my emotions under control. Now, I use my energy to play the match."

Kelly, who had never regularly played the No. 1 singles position until this year, made some necessary changes to her game. "I was trying to play the same way at No. 1 as I had at the other positions," she said. "I have to be able to adjust my game in order to beat other players. I have to make my opponent play the way she doesn't want to play."

Mason said that Kelly has vastly improved over the course of the season but he refuses to take any credit for that improvement. "She's the one who turned it around," said the fifth-year head coach. "It's taken quite a bit of dedication on her part, too. She works out three times a week. She runs. And it's all begun to pay off because right now, she's starting to peak."

Kelly's turnaround has certainly been a big help to the rest of the team. "When your No. 1 player is consistently winning, it makes the whole team that much stronger," said Mason.

On the men's side, little did Lamothe know when he was handed his first tennis racquet at the age of 12 by an uncle, that he would someday become a mainstay of the FIU team.

Playing in his native country, Haiti, Lamothe went on to become the national tennis champion. As a result, he was the Haitian represen-

tative at the South American Olympic games.

When it came time for college, Lamothe first enrolled at the University of Idaho then transferred to the University of Michigan. But for an individual who was born and raised in the tropics and who wanted to excel in an outdoor sport, the American northern reaches were just "too cold." He wanted to transfer once more but this time to a warm-weather climate.

Three years ago, as Coach Guy Calhoun was beginning to assemble his 1984 Sunblazer squad, he received a telephone call from former FIU tennis All-American Renald Etienne who had nothing but praise in recommending his countryman Lamothe.

Today, whether he plays out of any of the top four positions, Calhoun knows he'll get a top effort from Lamothe.

"Ruben is an overachiever in working on his tennis game," said Calhoun. "Playing mostly out of the No. 3 singles position, if he doesn't win, we're not likely to win as a team."

"His mental approach to the game is by far his greatest strength. He plays matches probably as well as anyone in college tennis. He's in every match, every point. You might beat him six-love, but there is no such thing as an easy match against him."

In addition to his court talents, Lamothe has shown talents in the classroom, too. He enters his final semester with a 3.4 grade point average (out of a possible 4.0) in his major Spanish and Translation.

Lamothe says he still has plenty of time to decide what he wants to do after graduating from FIU. A professional tennis career *could be* in the offing, or he could join his father who runs a private school in Haiti.

Both the men's and women's teams have critical matches coming up at the end of the season that will go a long way toward determining their post-season fates.

If these two student-athletes can continue their winning ways, and their teammates follow suit, there will be two strong possibilities for trips to the *NCAA Division II Nationals in May*.

Become a Part of the New Tradition

As Florida International University's athletic department makes the move forward to Division I status, the time is ripe to join the Sunblazers Club and be a part of a proud new tradition in South Florida sports.

As the University develops its athletic program ever further, the Sunblazers can be counted on to join the ranks of the other major college programs that make Floridians quite proud.

The women's basketball team had a banner season that resulted in a trip to the NCAA playoffs. The men's basketball team also had an excellent record, while Florida International's soccer team, which has twice been national champion, was a single goal away from becoming the first team ever to win a championship three times. The volleyball team went to the playoffs at the end of the 1985 season, and the women's soccer team did a very creditable job in its first season. The baseball team has never had a losing season since attaining Division I status three years ago, and individuals from the tennis and golf programs have competed in national tournament play.

As Florida International tries to achieve the pinnacle of success, support is a necessary ingredient of the mix that will take our program to the top. The Sunblazers Club is the vehicle that will enable the University to go onward and upward. It provides short and long range benefits to FIU and to all Sunblazer student-athletes. Your contribution helps athletically talented students in pursuit of a quality college education, and lays a foundation for future excellence in the national and international spotlight.

Victory can only be attained through a true team effort. Please complete the form, or call us at (305) 554-3161 or 554-2756 and join the Sunblazers Club. Become a member of the Florida International University team.

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Adderley: Nothing But the Best

To watch the almost daily improvement in the play of Sunblazers baseball center fielder Ken Adderley is to watch the play of a possible future Major League talent.

Adderley, the senior from Nassau, Bahamas, entered this season with the desire to be the best, and over the course of the first three-quarters of this season, that's exactly what he's been.

"When we first saw Kenny, he was a freshman at Miami-Dade C.C. North," remembered Coach Danny Price. "He would get an outstanding jump on the ball defensively and he hit the ball well too. From that day on, we knew we had to follow his progress."

At that time, Adderley was just a newcomer to the game of baseball. In the Bahamas, while attending A.F. Adderley High School (named after his grandfather for his work in civil rights on the Island), Adderley ran track and played softball.

Playing sandlot baseball, however, he was selected All-Bahamian four times and twice was a member of the Island championship team. But his time under Coach Demie Mainieri at Dade-North was his first organized baseball experience in the United States.

As it turned out, FIU wasn't the only program interested in the talents of Adderley. Being an international student, Adderley was ineligible for the Major League Free Agent Draft. So, after graduation from junior college, he was contacted by the Chicago Cubs who offered him a free agent contract.

"I made up my mind that when I felt physically and mentally ready, only then would I sign a pro contract," said Adderley. "My sophomore year on the field wasn't all that I anticipated it could be and I wanted to finish school and get my degree. So I turned them down."

Coming to FIU, last year was Adderley's best in organized baseball. He led the Sunblazers with a .341 batting average, stole 30 of 31 bases, including a school record 26 consecutive, had four home runs and 30 RBI. For his efforts, he was voted team Most Valuable Player.

When it was over, Adderley believed he was now ready to begin his professional baseball career. But the call never came this time.

"Last year, I thought I was definitely ready to sign. I was mentally and physically ready to play pro ball. When I didn't get the call I just felt terrible. I went back home for a while and really had to do some thinking on just what I was going to do," said Adderley.

Adderley did return, with All-America credentials, and with something to prove.

He's hit for a .380 batting average over the first half of the season

with 20 RBI in 31 games from his leadoff spot in the order. Maybe most importantly, he scored 31 runs while being considered the team's sparkplug.

"Kenny's the catalyst of this ball club," said Price. "When he gets on base and scores runs, we win ball games.

"What impresses me most about him is he keeps showing you improvement. Really, he's still just learning the game yet his potential seems just limitless."

But Adderley's coup de grace thus far in 1986 has been a consecutive game hitting streak that just recently came to an end at 31, breaking the previous school mark of 24 set back in 1980 by Rusty McNealy, FIU's first and only big league performer.

During the streak, which included four games at the end of last season, Adderley was 58-for-144 for a .403 batting average.

"To accomplish that kind of hitting streak just shows you what kind of ball player Kenny Adderley is," said Price. "To have a streak like that, you have to be very consistent. And Kenny is a pretty smooth operator day in and day out."

Adderley admitted that he enjoyed the notoriety and experience of the extended hitting streak, but at the same time, he's glad it's over.

"It was a lot of fun but as it went on, I was putting tremendous pressure on myself, pressures I didn't need at this time of the year.

"But it was good that it happened because it gave me some exposure. And coming in the first part of our season, when our schedule was the toughest, I was glad I could contribute. Now that it's over, I can begin to concentrate on my other goals," said Adderley.

Now Ken Adderley can begin concentrating on helping the Sunblazers achieve their first Division I post-season playoff berth then hopefully, a Major League career.

Sunblazers Club Golf Outing Set

The Sunblazers Club has announced plans for its first annual golf outing on Friday, May 16 at the Fontainebleau Golf Course. All Club members, University faculty, staff and friends of the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics are invited to attend. For further information, call the Athletics Office at (305) 554-3161.

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