

Seminoles' Prieto Enjoys Happy Homecoming
By Bret Clein
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In Florida State's first road game of the early season at Tulane, an unsung, hometown hero came into the game at the end of the first half to help the Seminoles maintain their lead, and ultimately, pick up a win in New Orleans for its second victory of the season.

In front of about 30 friends and family, redshirt sophomore Harrison Prieto wanted to play and help the Seminoles to a victory against Tulane.

"To go home and play in front of my family and friends at Tulane was fun," said Prieto. "But to have my family there and play meaningful minutes meant a lot. My dad was probably about to cry up in the stands because he knows all the walk-ons and I work really hard during practice. To get an opportunity to play meaningful minutes means the world."

With 4:18 left in the first half, Prieto, a walk-on forward from nearby Mandeville, La., checked into the game after a second early foul by teammate RaiQuan Gray.

"I knew we were in foul trouble and then RaiQuan got two quick ones," said Prieto. "I thought maybe I needed to tie my shoes and get ready. Coach Ham pointed and told me to get in."

Not expecting to get in the game so early, Prieto brought energy off the bench during a four-minute run at the end of the half in which Florida State did not allow Tulane to convert a field goal. The Seminoles increased their lead from three points to four points with Prieto in the lineup.

"Whenever a walk-on gets the opportunity to get in and play, we have to make sure the coaches can trust us to go out and not mess anything up," Prieto said. "We need to run the right plays and play our principals on defense. When I went in, we were in a situation where we were only up a couple of points. There was no space for mistakes, so I needed to play how we play, play with as much energy as I could and work to energize my teammates to help us get through that four-minute stretch and into the second half."

Prieto came to Florida State to follow his childhood dream of becoming a meteorologist. He also thought his basketball experience might land him a spot on the Seminoles' basketball team as a walk-on.

"Florida State's meteorology program is really good, and I've known since I was a kid that I wanted to study meteorology and be a meteorologist," said Prieto. "I came to Florida State as a student and contacted the coaching staff to see if there was a way I could walk on. My experience at Florida State has been awesome and I made the team my freshman season."

Prieto never expected to play so many minutes, especially late in the first half of a close game, 45 minutes from where he grew up. He hopes his play against Tulane will give the Seminoles' coaching staff confidence in him as a player and allow him to contribute to Florida State's success this season.

"This game gave me the confidence that when I am called upon to contribute, I will be able to do so," said Prieto. "I went out there (against Tulane) and had a lot of fun. That is what you live for when you practice and work hard every day. When that opportunity comes, you need to enjoy it as much as you can while taking the game seriously."

Prieto and the Noles return to their home court in Tallahassee to take on Canisius on Monday, Nov. 19 at 7 p.m. inside the Donald L. Tucker Center.