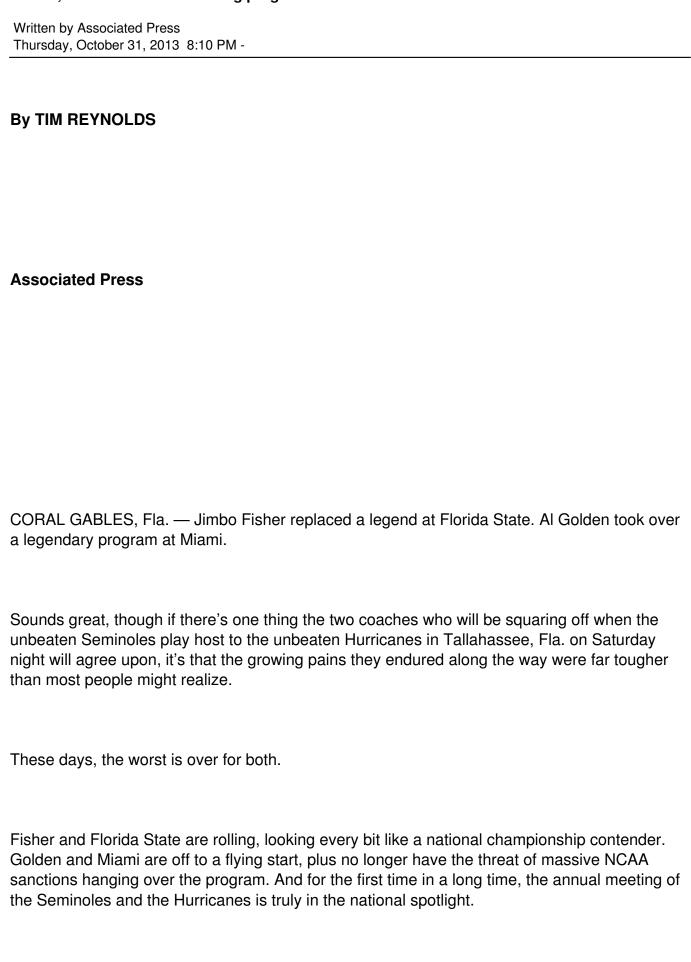
Fisher, Golden both still building programs



"Shows college football is gettin' right again," Fisher said.

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Written by Associated Press Thursday, October 31, 2013 8:10 PM -

Sure seems that way. No. 3 Florida State (7-0, 5-0 Atlantic Coast Conference) and No. 7 Miami (7-0, 3-0) are meeting as unbeatens this late in the season for the first time since 1991, when the Hurricanes won a nailbiter in Tallahassee on the way to the school's fourth national title in 11 seasons. The 'Canes have just one championship since and oddsmakers have listed them as 3-touchdown underdogs this weekend.

Florida State's resurgence on the national scene is clearly farther along, without question. The Seminoles won the ACC title last year and the Orange Bowl. They're putting up numbers now akin to when Bobby Bowden was in his coaching heyday in Tallahassee. They have a quarterback in Jameis Winston who has a first name many people couldn't pronounce correctly a few weeks ago but is now a Heisman Trophy frontrunner.

Even their rivals at the other end of the state are tipping their collective caps.

"I think clearly you have to be a program to graduate the number of kids that they graduated and yet be in the same situation they are in right now," Golden said of the Seminoles. "We are building that. A lot of people are premature and saying 'The U is back.' The U is building. We have to continue to build."

But when the NCAA mess over — nine scholarships over three years is the worst of the football penalties; even that may be lessened over time — the building job at Miami might become more advanced and quickly.

"It's good for the state of Florida, it's good for the ACC and it's good for college football," Fisher said. "I think it's good all the way around and, like I say, it's one of the great traditional rivalries in the game and it's great to see both teams up there."

Fans tend to be impatient, of course. So that only added to the magnitude of what both Fisher and Golden had to deal while building things at their current schools.

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Fisher started 12-7 at Florida State, before reeling off 26 wins in the Seminoles' last 29 games. Golden started 11-11 at Miami and is 9-0 since. Fans seem a touch happier at both places now. Go figure.

"They have to deal with it one way, we have to deal with it another," Fisher added. "We have to focus on what we do and you can't worry about that. I'm sure everybody doesn't want to lose but that's part of the game, and you as a coach have to keep staying true to what you believe in."

For Golden, that's been particularly true and tested.

The NCAA mess that revolved around a former booster who's now serving a 20-year prison term for masterminding a \$930 million Ponzi scheme had nothing to do with Golden, though he inherited the problem. He wasn't aware of the looming NCAA investigation when he took the Miami job. The booster, Nevin Shapiro, was already in prison at the time.

And for 2½ years, it held him down, while he was trying to lift Miami up.

It's an anchor no more.

"If they're going to negative recruit against us, it's going to be about what we do on the field, it's going to be about our beautiful surroundings here, it's going to be the weather, it's going to be about our tradition," Golden added. "It's not going to be about the NCAA."