

Florida State Coaching For Literacy Against North Carolina

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When Florida State takes on No. 14 North Carolina tomorrow, the Seminole coaching staff will be coaching for more than just a win.

FSU (11-2, 0-1) will host its third annual Fight for Literacy game against the Tar Heels (12-2, 1-0) and the coaches will wear lime green ties to bring awareness to the issue.

Associate head coach Stan Jones was one of the first coaches to jump on board with the Coaching for Literacy associate, and he is now a member of the board along with eight other college basketball coaches.

"I've always been an avid reader," Jones told the Tallahassee Democrat.

"In my early childhood education reading was a big part of our curriculum. My parents were involved in Christian education. My father was a pastor. They were always encouraging reading in our household.

"...I'm always looking for things to try to make a difference as a coach and I thought this was something that I felt really good hanging my hat on and putting my name behind it. It's something that I'm very proud of that we're a part of it."

Jones was lucky enough to grow up in a family environment that promoted reading, and he has made it his goal to promote that same environment to his players.

His office is lined with books, and he makes a point to share books with his players and promote the importance of education and knowledge with them.

"I think anytime that we can use our forum as athletes, coaches, and athletic programs to promote things and make a difference, outside of just being a player or a coach, its important," Jones said.

"Someone instilled that in me many years ago, that in five years from now that the two biggest things that will make a difference in your success is the books that you read and the friends that you keep. You're going to become who you hang with and the knowledge that you gain moving forward.

"...If it's helping your players in college, it can't do anything but help if you can get it in front of less fortunate and underprivileged children who don't have the opportunity and give them the opportunity to make a better way for themselves."

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 64 percent of all fourth graders in America are not reading at the level they should be.

According to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy, U.S. Department of Education, 85 percent of the juveniles in the court system cannot read.

Those are just some of the things that Jones is hoping to fight, and when he brought the idea up to head coach Leonard Hamilton, he immediately wanted in.

"I went to coach and said I'd like to get behind this," Jones said.

"Coach Hamilton came from a time in our society when the only way for a minority people to make it was to get their education. Those generations were always trying to get their children to better themselves.

"Education has always been a big concept that coach Hamilton believes in so when it came to reading and promoting something like this that was new on the market, he was happy to get behind it."