

Terance Mann Team Leader for FSU Basketball

By Jim Crosby
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Seminole basketball player Terance Mann was raised in a gym.

In fact, as a toddler the way he learned to count was by being taught the uniform numbers of the players on his Mom's basketball team.

Mann's mom, Daynia La-Force, told *Unconquered*: "I was an assistant coach and trying to be a good mom and a good coach, so I took Terance with me on the team bus when we traveled. He would sit in the back with the girls and he learned how to count by learning what each number on their basketball uniforms was."

Current Seminole assistant coach Charlton Young (CY) has known Mann's family for a long time and says having the versatile senior player, who has become a team leader for the 2019 team, in the game is like having a coach out on the floor.

"His IQ is what separates him from other players. Having been involved in his mother's practices, film sessions, and individual sessions growing up puts him ahead of his time in understanding the game."

Mann has always been a winner, taking home championships in high school and with AAU teams and has been a key factor in the Seminoles continued improvement over the course of his four seasons.

Fifth year Senior Phil Cofer says: "Terance always has been a 'glue guy.' Telling the younger guys and even people like me, older guys, what we should be doing."

In the Seminoles dramatic 2018 Elite 8 run that saw them end up just 47 seconds away from the Final Four, Mann was second on the team in scoring with a career high 12.6 ppg. while averaging 29.2 minutes of playing time per game.

But more important than the points-per-game aspect of Mann's contribution to FSU's success, his leadership has been vital to the growth of the team and the program.

Junior guard Trent Forest says: "Terance brings a lot of leadership based on a lot of experience to the team. He understands the game of basketball and that makes him a key player. He is studying the game all the time and he understands how the game works. Great leader. Good guy to be around."

A familiar sight in a Seminole basketball game, when a shot is missed by a teammate, is to see Mann in perfect position under the basket to go up grab the ball and slam dunk it, to the surprise of everyone in the house.

Turning a negative into a positive for his team is what Mann does well.

"That's definitely timing," Terance says. It is a skill I've had since high school. My coaches drilled it into our heads that it is how you get easy points."

Forest says: "He just has that instinct to be wherever the ball is. Only a few people have that in basketball. He is always finding himself around the ball wherever it is. He can always kinda gauge where the ball is going. Not too many people can do that."

So how does a budding young basketball star from Lowell, Massachusetts, end up coming all the way down to Florida State?

His mom says: "The main thing that solidified his going to Florida State was Leonard Hamilton. We just love the way he embraces his role, not only as a coach but as a mentor to these young men. I just thought Leonard Hamilton is going to be a good role model for my son for more than just a basketball player.

For me it wasn't about the distance, or the conference, or the level, it was about who my son would be surrounded by on a daily basis. Who would treat him as more than just a basketball player and Leonard Hamilton was the perfect person for that."

Terance says: "It's hard to put into words what Coach Hamilton has meant to me as a man in life and basketball. He lets you learn the game by yourself. He will feed you little bits of stuff that will help you elevate your game."

Mann appreciates the philosophy of the Seminole head coach that stresses the importance of staying in the moment, not thinking about the next day or next game but giving your best where you are. He says that has helped him not to get too low and also not to get too high.

Community service has played an important role in Terance Mann's growth during his time in Tallahassee. He especially enjoys talking to the kids in high school. "I remember when I was in high school they got guys who were college athletes to come in and talk to us." So, he feels that is an important responsibility to fulfill.

"They don't care how many points you have scored or who you are on the team, they look up to you because one day they want to be who you are," Mann said.

Most of what Mann has done has its roots in his family background. He chose the uniform #14 because that is the number that his Mom wore in her playing days at Georgetown.

Most people think his name is based on the character played by James Earl Jones in the movie "Field of Dreams." Wrong!

He is actually named after his grandmother, Terancia. That's why he has only one "r" in his name. His middle name "Stanley" is the same name as his great-grandfather.

Preparing for his final season Terance Stanley Mann worked hard to shore up different areas of his game like his three-point shooting, free throw accuracy and determination to be a more aggressive leader.

The hard work paid off. By mid-season he had already reached the 1,000-point club and passed up 25 players on the All-Time Scoring List. His gravity-defying baskets delighted Seminole fans and left opponents scratching their heads: "how did he do that."

The excitement level rises as Mann races toward the basket with the ball and there are one or two players set to block his shot. Then as they go up Mann has a way hanging there a second or two longer, twisting and finding a way to reach up and bang the ball off the backboard and into the basket. Those plays are as big crowd pleasers as a slam dunk is.

One thing that Mann takes pride in that is definitely enjoyed and appreciated by the fans is that during his four years in Seminole territory he never lost to the Gators. He played in four wins in four games against the Florida Gators helping FSU stretch its win streak over Florida to five straight games.

Coach Young says that Mann's contribution to Florida State's success goes beyond his achievements on the court.

"The program has not been able to give enough credit to Terance for what he has done for Florida State."

Apparently when he was a senior in high school he not only committed to FSU, but he was working for the program. He called Malik Beasley and Dwayne Bacon to convince them how successful they would be if they came to Florida State.

CY adds: Terance was a revolutionary and may never get all the credit he deserves.”

Always humble and appreciative, Mann says the scholarship provided by the Seminole Boosters means a lot to him. “Just being able to come here and get this education means everything for me. Just having that for free and my parents not having to pay for it is amazing and will help me down the road.”

Mann’s Mom Daynia, being a coach as well as a mother, has a deep appreciation for the scholarship and work of the Boosters.

“Obviously the scholarship gives the student athlete an opportunity to not have to worry about getting a loan they would have to pay back. It puts them in a position where they appreciate the opportunity and the success they are having and when they leave it comes back and may be a voice for another student-athlete maybe 10 or 12 years later. I think it comes full-circle to represent Florida State not just for four years, but for a lifetime. You will always be a Seminole.”

Likewise, Florida State alumni and fans will always say they are proud that #14 Terance Stanley Mann is a Seminole.