

The Evolution of Florida State 'Stat Stuffer' Terance Mann

By Curt Weiler

Tallahassee Democrat

March 4, 2019

Terance Mann is a man of many different talents.

Early in his career, Florida State basketball coach Leonard Hamilton gave him the nickname of "Stat Stuffer" for his ability to do all the little things to make an impact each game.

This has played a role in making him one of the most impactful FSU basketball players in recent memory.

Mann is one of five seniors set to be honored before No. 13 FSU (23-6, 11-5 in ACC) takes on No. 16 Virginia Tech (22-6, 11-5 in ACC) Tuesday at 7 p.m. inside the Tucker Civic Center along with center Christ Koumadje, forward Phil Cofer and guards PJ Savoy and David Nichols.

"After having him on campus for a short time, I realized that he affected all phases of the game. He can play all five positions, makes good decisions with the ball, good ball handler and good floor vision, athletic, can rebound, defend. He's a natural basketball player," Hamilton said of Mann.

"Nothing he's done has surprised me. I was very impressed with him then. I'm even more impressed with him now."

Regardless of how he finishes his career, Mann's impact on the FSU record books is already substantial.

He's just the third player in program history to amass 1,200 points, 600 rebounds, 200 assists and 100 steals. He's in elite company in that group with FSU legends Bob Sura and Doug Edwards.

Before the VT game, he's seven games away from tying Okaro White for the most games played in an FSU career. His 93 career starts are tied for 13th-most in program history, four starts from the Top 10.

He's 26th all-time in points (1,234), 16th all-time in rebounds (654) and currently has the 15th-best career field goal percentage in program history (.558).

"That's crazy. I went over it the other day in (FSU assistant) coach (Stan) Jones' office. I need (four) more wins to be the all-time leading winner in school history. I need (seven) more games to tie (the games record), nine to break that," Mann told the *Democrat*.

"There's a lot of stuff coming down the stretch. I need three more ACC wins to have the most ACC wins of all-time."

Mann the Catalyst

Mann's recruitment to FSU began incidentally when he was a seventh grader thanks to a connection between Mann's mother, Rhode Island head women's basketball coach Daynia La-Force, and current FSU assistant Charlton "C.Y." Young, then beginning his stint as the head coach at Georgia Southern.

Mann and Young talked often and developed a relationship outside of basketball that paid dividends for the Seminoles when he committed to FSU before he even visited.

Without any way of knowing it at the time, Mann's commitment started the recruiting class that changed the fortune of the FSU basketball program.

"Terance called me and he said, 'I'm calling to tell you I'm coming with you.' He said, 'We need (Malik) Beasley and I think you're already getting (Dwayne) Bacon,'" Young told the *Democrat*.

"He said, 'I'm going to call Beasley. I'm going to call Bacon. I'll say I'll do the dirty work, you guys come in, I'll play wherever you want me to play. Let's turn it around at Florida State. We can do it.'

"Terance Mann was the catalyst."

Mann, Bacon, Beasley and Koumadje all signed with FSU to complete an incredible 2015 signing class. Mann will leave an FSU team that missed the NCAA Tournament each of the three years before his arrival with three consecutive NCAA Tournament appearances, the program's first Elite Eight appearance in 25 years and whatever else the rest of this season brings.

"He's the kind of kid who only looks good winning," Young said.

"He just makes his team win. He did that at Tilton (High School), he did that with (Boston Amateur Basketball Club) and he's done that at Florida State. That's consistent behavior."

Patience pays off

Mann wasn't immediately the player he is now upon stepping on campus. He was forced into a smaller role as a freshman, averaging 5.2 points and 17 minutes while fellow freshmen Bacon and Beasley each averaged over 15 points per game.

"There was frustration. Mainly not frustration because I wanted to be the hyped dude, I wanted to be in the middle of it, but mainly because I didn't know if I would ever be," Mann said.

"The coaches definitely helped me a lot. They were able to get me in the mix enough to where I learned a lot and was able to turn that all around and gain experience off that."

Mann's patience paid off as he was named a captain ahead of his sophomore season in 2016 -- a position he's held ever since -- and saw his stats improve significantly to 8.4 points and 4.5 rebounds per game.

His numbers shot up again in 2017-18 as he led the team in scoring for most of the season, averaging 12.5 points, 5.4 rebounds and 2.6 assists per game.

Coming to a close

His scoring is actually down this season -- he's currently averaging 11.5 points per game -- but his rebounding numbers (6.3 per game) are up and he's added another facet to his game.

After shooting 27 percent from three-point range across his first three seasons, Mann has made 26 threes this season -- more than he had in his first three years combined -- and is shooting 46.3 percent from the perimeter. That's the second-best mark in the ACC this season and on pace to be the third-best three-point percentage in a season in FSU history.

"Not many guys get better every year. Terance is one of those guys. A lot of NBA scouts call me and I say his best basketball is going to be around 25 or 26," Young said.

"I think Terance has a bright future, but I'm really proud of his leadership, the impact he's had on the program, how much better he's gotten and the way he's just been an ambassador of the program since the first day he enrolled at Florida State."

Ask anyone around the program about Mann and their praise is just as effusive.

"Terance is more of a complete player. Those areas of his game that he needed to improve on, he spent hours and hours. He's coachable, a team player, a good locker-room guy," Hamilton said.

"He's a leader on and off the court. He's a guy that represents what the student-athlete is supposed to be about." It's fitting that Mann will end his career at the Tucker Civic Center in what will be one of the biggest games of his career there.

If FSU beats the Hokies, it will secure a top-four ACC seed and the double-bye that comes with it for the second time in the last three years.

To the surprise of no one who knows him, that's exactly where Mann's mind is at heading into the game. "I'm just really trying to get this fourth-place double-bye," Mann said.

"I know it's Senior Day, a lot of emotions are going to be in the arena, but I'm just trying to leave my mark here, go out as a winner. I'm just worried about the win."