



Coaches Quotes

Florida State 113, The Citadel 78

Friday, November 24, 2017

Donald L. Tucker Center

Tallahassee, Fla.

Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton

Opening Statement

“Even though we won the game by a decisive margin, I never really felt comfortable until the last couple of minutes of the game. With a team that plays this style of ball, a 15-point lead is not that much playing against an opponent that shoots the ball as well as they do. I thought we did a pretty good job with our energy and aggressiveness; you try to help and recover which means you stay trying to plug up the middle with your defensive effort a little bit more. I guess with some teams you have to stunt them. I thought in the first half we were staying too long with our help, and we were aggressively playing defense, but we just couldn’t get back with their shooters. In the second half, I thought we did a little bit better of a job doing that in spurts but this game challenged all of our defensive principles. Thank goodness they didn’t have a big guy inside to hurt us with a little post-touches. So, they challenged all of our defensive principles. We really had to play hard the whole game because we just knew that when you play against a team that shoots the ball this well, a 14-point lead would not have been enough if things went the wrong way for us. I was proud of our guys; I thought in the second half our guys made the stops we needed we attacked the basket and transitioned. Braian hit some 3’s and gave us a little momentum. In the first half, I thought we had tremendous looks and tremendous 3-point opportunities that didn’t fall. We encourage our kids to keep shooting. We believe that PJ (Savoy) and M.J. Walker are very good shooters. I think overall, it was a pretty good effort individually. And Terance (Mann) seemed to feel more comfortable. Ike (Obiagu) I thought gave us a good minutes tonight with three blocks. He was extremely aggressive. Overall, I’m pleased with the progress we’re making but still got a long-ways to go. Mfiondu (Kabengele) -- we didn’t think he was playing very well in the first half at all because he just didn’t seem to have quite the energy, and he didn’t rotate correctly. He made several errors. We looked up and he had eight points and five rebounds and we thought he was playing poorly. He has a knack for stuffing the stat sheet. He has a way of getting a big rebound and putting it back and being at the right place at the right time. He only played 14 minutes, 16 points and 12 rebounds. That’s a big-time night’s work and I don’t think he’s scratching the surface on his potential.”

On Florida State advantage in scoring 27 second chance points...

“We’re a little bigger, more athletic, and we expected to do that. They kept the lane open. They shot a lot of 3’s. We were able to get out and be a little more aggressive. I think we’re bigger and stronger and more athletic, and we took advantage of that. But they got 17 offensive rebounds themselves because they shot so many 3’s, and the ball has a tendency to shoot long. Our guys go towards the rim and the ball’s bouncing over their head. They shoot so many of them on a regular basis, and they knew where the ball was going. Couple of times they even tapped them out when we were going towards the bucket; that’s a fundamental

that we have not mastered yet. Our guys are shooting long shots, you need to come back and open a passing lane and put your body on people, and they did a very good job getting the offensive rebound. I think it evened us out. I think we had 16 offensive rebounds, they had 17, so you could say both of us rebounded very well.”

On the play of Mfiondu Kabengele...

“He’s going to have the opportunity there’s no doubt about that. He played 14 minutes, Ike played 15. We’ll be small some, and we’ll go with the big lineup. Every game is going to take on a different personality. We’re going to be able to hold a fort down until big fella comes back.”

Does Mfiondu Kabengele feel comfortable?

“All year long we try to train our players to play all over the court. In practice every day he (Mfiondu) plays inside, and he plays outside, so he’s savvy enough to be able to go back and forth between positions and be effective.”

Ike Obiagu’s response to his role as a starter...

“I thought he got fatigued a little bit out there, he’s already an emotional guy. He plays so hard. He gives you tremendous effort, and he affects the game even when he’s not even given a stat. He changes the game, he discourages the guys from coming in the lane because he has such a presence in the middle, and he blocked three shots in 15 minutes. He’s one of the best shot blockers around. He’s still growing, still learning. We’ve got to get his free throws worked out. We’ve got to finish around the basket a little better. But I’m really pleased with the progress he’s making - he’s going to be a good player for us.”

On the importance of 12-point lead to begin the game...

“There’s no doubt we have a tremendous amount of respect for their system and their style, and they’re very disciplined in what they do. They have tremendous physical condition – you can tell that they have a military attitude about them where they’re just focused. They don’t make too many mistakes, and they just keep coming at you. I sit my guys out half the game, and I’m glad I don’t have to play against that kind of system, I just never felt comfortable. My guys kept saying, “are you going to put the walk-ons in?” I kept saying “a few more minutes”. But that’s all out of respect I have for their system and coach – he does an outstanding job, and they create a lot of steals. They’re in the top-two teams in getting steals. For us to take care of the ball, to turn over the ball 14 times against this team, is good. They had several guys out there that were extremely quick and aggressive.”

Was Mfiondu Kabengele expected to make this level of impact this year?

“Mfiondu has a knack for raising his level to higher heights than you can expect. He’ll go block a shot and you’ll wonder where that leap came from. He has a way of motivating himself. He’s extremely emotional. The game means an awful lot to him. He almost takes on another person out there when the game starts, and he’s a great teammate. He’s encouraging; he’s verbal during the game, whether he’s in the game or out of the game; and he’s just now starting to learn how to play. He had good stats, but he was out of place. He lost his balance on several occasions, and he just couldn’t quite sort out how to execute the fundamentals of a game like this – a fast-paced game. He was kind of lost a little bit, but he still was catching baskets and playing hard and being aggressive and you like to see that in a youngster. He doesn’t have very much fear.

On Phil Cofer...

“He hasn’t actually played a whole 4 years – he’s had enough injuries and I think he’s seizing the moment. He’s excited about being healthy and it means an awful lot to him. He’s a Seminole at heart, and he displays it every time he goes on the court.”