



Coaches Quotes

Florida State (96) vs. Loyola (Md.) 71

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Donald L. Tucker Center, Tallahassee, Fla.

Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton

Opening Statement

“The game got off to a real interesting start. We went through a part of the game that started off with six straight minutes without a stop. That was a really challenging period there. It kind of spun us a bit. I was proud of our team because we kept making adjustments. We didn’t do a good job containing the dribble. I think we are much better than that. This team was very well prepared and extremely quick. I think this gave us what we needed. Part of developing into the best team we could become is sometimes you have to overcome those mental challenges of having an emotional victory and then coming back and having to recharge your batteries again. I didn’t think we came out with the same level of focus but I thought that from an execution standpoint, there were times that we really executed very well offensively. I thought that defensively, we did not contain the dribble very well and I didn’t think we did a good job rebounding a lot of their misses. That gives us a lot to go back and work on and watch on film and collectively as a group, challenge them to grow and improve in areas and make sure we are mentally and emotionally charged each and every night. So, overall, I am pleased. We had a goal of making 300 passes in this game, we came with about 260. Overall, this is an improvement from the beginning of the year, so we are making progress. The good thing about this team is we have proven and found ways to win games but we have a tremendous amount to improve. The kids have such great attitudes and we are creeping in the right direction of reaching our full potential.”

Following the Florida game, how is the team’s morale, even coming into this game against Loyola?

“We have great morale. We have great chemistry. Our guys are always excited; they are even excited for practice so they’re working very hard. We don’t have an issue with morale or attitudes. We have a young, inexperienced team. We have 10 players that are freshman and sophomores. Now, we are still growing and still maturing. Guys are responding and giving us a path, we just aren’t a finished product yet. We have a lot of work to do but we are moving in the right direction.”

Your team was 17 for 20 from the free throw line, how encouraging is that for you after some struggles early in the year?

“We have areas we have not been consistent in and that’s one of them but I have always said we have a chance to being a great free throw team. Also, we have not shot the ball consistently well from the three. We have a chance of being a great three-point shooting team. I think we have a chance of being a lockdown defensive team. But what people are doing against us, they are junking their systems in terms of running plays and systematically spreading the floor. The best they can do is drive it to the paint and kick it, that’s what people are doing. We have to learn to adjust to it. We are showing we have grown, we’re showing we’re making progress and finding ways to win games.”

Are you using that Florida win to give your team a reference point of how good they can be; how much better they can be?

“Realistically, we have to put that behind us. We have so many more games with added significance that we can’t dwell on that too much. The only thing I think we can take from that game is that we were both mentally and emotionally engaged. We have to find a way to get into that zone every time we walk onto that court. We’re not

quite there yet. If you're going to compete in the ACC, whomever we play is going to be as talented as the University of Florida. So if you want to be successful, you have to find a way to develop the mentality it takes to go out and play with that emotion all the time. That's a little bit of a challenge we have. We are not mature enough to come to what we call that "magic level." That's a negative but that's part of the growth process and maturing process you have to go through."

Coming into the game, your team ranks 3rd in the country in offensive rebounding. Defensive rebounding, is not nearly as effective. What is the difference between rebounding one side of the court compared to the other?

"I don't think we were effective on the boards today. We're just not a finished product. We have to become a better rebounding team. I'm not overly concerned because our attitudes are good and are guys are responding. We hold them accountable, they hold each other accountable. I'm not overly concerned. We are just like most teams who are young and growing and trying to find themselves. We're just not quite there yet. We take all kinds of statistics and look at them and break them down. We will need to get better to prepare for conference play. "

You held Loyola to 16 percent on the three and Florida to 24 percent. Have you made a point of emphasis to lock down the three pointers?

"We try to do that all the time. But we also like to put the same level of emphasis on containing the dribble so it all kind of works together. We understand that in most games, you can't give them a lot of free throws, 3's and paint touches. We took the 3 away, shot a lot of three throws but gave a lot of paint touches."

Even though he fouled out, what did you think of M.J. Walker's performance?

"He shown the ability to be there on certain occasions but he also has had games where he played like a freshman. He needs to be more consistent. That's normally what freshman do. It takes a while for them to get comfortable. He is attitude is good. Effort is tremendous. Playing tremendously unselfish. I thought his shot selection was good. He is growing and getting more consistent."