



No. 13 Florida State 93, vs. Canisius 61
Monday, Nov. 19, 2018
Postgame Press Conference

FSU Head Coach Leonard Hamilton

Opening Statement:

"The score was not a fair representation of how that game was for us. I thought that Reggie (Witherspoon) had his team extremely well prepared. They challenged all of our defensive fundamentals. I'm not so sure I've ever seen a team hit as many shots as the buzzer was going down. They must have shot 70 percent with under five seconds on the shot clock. I thought that their game plan on PJ Savoy was excellent. They were determined they were not going to give him any real good, open looks. I'm saying that because it caused us to make a lot of adjustments. When a team is executing their defensive game plan as well they were, not only did they overplayed us but they also took certain spots on the floor away from us that challenged our ability to be consistent. For instance, we like to try and make 115-120 passes in a half. We only were able to make 74, 75 passes. Not because our kids were playing selfish, but because their defensive schemes made us stagnant. But I was proud of the fact that we were able to make the adjustments. There were times in the game where I thought we moved the ball very well. The things that have been concerning us is how long is it going to take for our rotation players to start figuring things out. I thought they played a little better tonight and I thought our energy was good coming off the bench. We had 51 points coming off the bench, which is high in anybody's book. We still show some periods where we need to get better and we can't be as stagnant on the offensive end. We can't sometimes attack as quick as we did in the first half and part of the second half. Overall I'm pleased, the effort was good. I thought we had great energy coming off the bench. We are making progress with our younger players, our first year guys. But I take my hat off to this team, this is the hardest, toughest 30-point victory I've ever been a part of."

Canisius had three really good guards that could make shots whether they were challenged or not. It seemed that you guys challenged almost everything. How happy were you overall with the way you guarded those guys?

"I thought we did a pretty good job, no doubt about that. We are trying to concentrate on making progress in those areas. We are going to play against those type of guys in the ACC every night out. We got to figure out a way a way on how to contain them, contest a little better and do a little better job of making them miss because obviously if you give them a good look they were not going to miss in critical part of the game. I think we are growing up a little. I want to see how consistent we are going to be as we move into a tournament where we are going to be facing opponents that are equally as talented and well coached. These early games that have challenged us are going to serve well for us as we try to give our guys an idea of what it's going to be like when we prepare for the ACC. As we move into this tournament down there, we got to be ready to play on any given night. If you aren't something bad can happen. I think you've seen all the outstanding games that have been played around the country, some of the teams that have been favored have not come out on top. We don't want to be one of those teams."

Mfiondu (Kabengele) with the dunk late in the first half when you guys were trailing at that point, he brought some energy and went on to have a career night. What do you say about his contributions?

"It was obvious that we need guys to play with that level of energy. We challenge them we need to have energy coming off the bench. I thought we got it for the most part. But I don't want to have to be highlighting someone having exceptional energy coming off the bench much longer, that needs to be our identity. We try to develop an identity that is consistent. And right now we're not quite there yet but, that was a great play and every one of those guys who came in made good plays. I don't think there was anyone that came in the game that didn't give us some type of spark at some point. That's what we're looking for. We need to have energy coming off for those guys. We think we've won games with as much with six through eleven as we have with one through five."

At one point Canisius brought the lead to only six points, how do you manage to encourage your guys to trust the process?

"We are growing in that area, there's no doubt about that. For instance, we had several possessions, far too many where we made one or two passes and guys tried to make plays without moving the defense. So when a team is set with a defense, you need to move the defense so you can get a high percentage shot. It's not a selfish thing, it's just they're adjusting to the way we have to play with this team in order for us to be successful. In other words, we need to constantly try and create high percentage for each other with ball movement and player movement. We had some moments where we didn't execute that very well. I don't think it's selfish, it's just learning how to play at this level in order to give yourself the best chance to win."

Devin Vassell, you talked about guys that brought a lot of energy. He played 14 minutes and had 10 points but he also had 3 steals. Just how impressed have you been with him?

"Devin (Vassell) has some instincts that allow him to make plays, offensively and defensively. He's athletic enough that he can physically do things because of his athleticism. But his anticipation on deflections and steals, the way he breaks on balls, his timing is excellent. You are just getting just a glimpse of what we see on a regular basis. On top, he's a sponge, he accepts coaching, he's eager to learn. He's not a guy who is stressed about making mistakes. He takes criticism with a smile on his face, he wants to get it right. I think he has a chance to develop into an outstanding player for us and we hope he keeps progressing and I think he will."

Is there any update on Phil (Cofer) and when he might be available?

"Not really, we're trying to get him out of the boot so he can just start doing some walking. I don't think he's anywhere near close being ready to play right now. We're a ways away. I do think he's getting better but it's one of its things where you let nature take its course."

With the way you guys played, swarming after shooters and diving on the floor a lot, is this team giving you the energy? I know you aren't where you want to be and it's the third game, to be but does it in its DNA to have that in them?

"We had a little bit more energy tonight than we did in New Orleans. But that's part of the growth process, this doesn't happen overnight. That's just the process we have to go through and you want to make progress, but in order to make progress you have to go through the process. Sometimes that creates the anxiety with players from an individual standpoint because they're competitors, they want to play, they want to contribute and psychologically when things aren't going well for them, sometimes they don't always handle it well. That's the maturing level we are trying to get through. Trying to get guys to buy into playing and keeping everyone fresh and that's a challenge. There was a period in the second half where I could see they were fatiguing because of the number of players we were running at them. We didn't necessarily have our most experienced players on the floor at that time, but we did have some young guys that were playing with a lot of energy and were able to make some plays, get some stops, get some rebounds, get some outlets and pushing the ball like that as hard as we have been doing and that fatigues some people. There was a period where I thought that was the difference in us being able to get some separation."

With the energy, how much of a test is the three games over four days against pretty good teams this weekend?

“There is no doubt that we are going to be challenged. We need our full complement of players playing well in order to be successful against the quality of competition we are facing. This is a good opportunity for us. We were down a couple points late in the first half. But towards the end, once again, the quality of our depth took its toll on them towards the end of the first half and we were able to get a little more separation. They cut it to about eight I believe a couple of times, but once again I thought that fresh bodies were able to go into the game and give us a boost of energy. Then there was a period where I thought we broke them because we threw a lot of guys at them. It wasn't because they weren't trying hard, they weren't executing and we were giving it pretty good effort. They're a good basketball team and very well coached.”