



Florida State 73, Purdue 72
ACC / Big Ten Challenge
Wednesday, November 28, 2018
Donald L. Tucker Center, Tallahassee, Florida

Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton

Opening Statement

"I said all along that I thought this team would challenge all of defensive principles and our ability to execute on the offensive end. First half, I think we got the best of them. We got some shots to fall and we moved the ball. Their defense was a lot sharper the second half, they made some adjustments and moved the ball even better. They shot a phenomenal percentage from the perimeter, that's their strength. They have four or five guys that are capable of knocking three's down. It seems that regardless of what we did, we couldn't get close enough to contain them. And on the offensive end, I thought we had great looks, but we couldn't get them to fall. The effort was good, but from a defensive standpoint we are not quite good enough to cause them to miss. In the last six or seven minutes I thought our defense tightened up a little bit and became more patient and cautious. We were able to get some deflections and steals and made some plays that helped pull a victory against a very good basketball team."

Was the last play designed for Trent all along?

"Yes, very seldom often you have one option. But we wanted him to take a flat ball screen and try to get the ball in the basket and put pressure on the defense. Trent scored 3,000 points in high school and is very comfortable once he gets in the lane, he's a great finisher and an excellent free throw shooter. We thought to put the ball in his hands. And if he got caught up we had PJ (Savoy) and M.J. (Walker) spotted up on different spots on the floor for him. He got in the lane and they took his right hand away but he's great at changing direction. Once he got below the free throw line he's got great touch and he was able to finish."

What is it about Trent that he can come through down the stretch?

"He impacts the game in a lot of ways even if he is not scoring. He moves the ball, makes good decisions, defends well, and talks to his teammates to communicate on the courts. He is a very valuable asset, even if the traditional statistics don't let you see that. We go back and chalk what is important to us, close outs and contests; things that are important to us, moving the ball, making the extra pass. And his grades are very high."

The team is now 6-1, is the team where you thought it would be with your expectations?

"I was hopeful that we could continue to keep winning while we are developing. I still don't totally think have our game offensively or defensively. We are still waiting to get on of our best players back healthy. Not having a guy like Phil, being a phenomenal shooter around the perimeter and being able to switch 1 through 5, it challenges us. But it is giving some of the youngsters some opportunity to grow and develop. RaiQuan Gray is showing promise, (Devin) Vassell is showing promise. These guys are going in and playing with really tremendous effort. They might not have great stats, but their contribution is valuable. The effort around the floor, fighting hard, and things that are important to us. Those guys are gaining more experience. Davis Nichols, his defense was good, he took charge when we went into the game, he moved the ball, and

gave us some great leadership. We still are in the development mode; I just hope we keep winning in the process. I think we have a long way to go offensively and defensively. We still are not quite where we need to be.”

Twice in the last week the team has been able to rally in the final minutes. What does that say about your team, it seems like they bring out the best play when they’re down and out like that.

“Philosophically that sounds good, but realistically coaches don’t want to wait until the game is on the line to make plays to win. That is who we are right now, we are not as consistent as we need to be offensively and defensively. We are growing and improving and we are a different team than we were last year. I hope that we can keep winning, like I said, while we are developing. We have a lot of areas we need to improve.”

At the end of the game, on Trent going for the ball making sure to not get the foul and force a turnover

“We have a term we call “Seminole”, and whenever you get go after a ball in a tie-up that’s what we call it. Our guys had the presence of mind, while the guy had the ball and was trying to hold it, to go in and tie the ball up. That was a big play at that time of the game and gave us possession and a chance to win the game.”

After seven games, is there anything that has surprised you about this team?

“I am surprised that our defense is not a little better. As much as we work on our offense, defense in the first half I thought we moved the ball very well. I think we had 125-130 passes that we made. In the second half, the ball stuck a little bit. At some point we didn’t seem to have that same pop and movement. Against a really good basketball team what is going to happen is what happened tonight. You have to be consistent. I am a little disappointed about that, but I cannot really be angry because I know that we are still a work in progress. We are still trying to bring it together. I am still trying to figure out my rotation, who performs in certain situations. I would have liked to play Devin Vassell more, because he is finding ways to contribute. But in a critical game like that I went with my most experienced guys. You would say that P.J. and M.J. are experienced, but not really. They are still coming around. RaiQuan Gray has exceeded my expectations. That’s who we are, let’s just hope we can keep winning while we grow and develop”.

David Nichols had his best game as a Seminole tonight, what are you seeing from him?

“I don’t think you guys have seen his best play. It is not easy for a guy who has played in another system for three years to come in as a point guard. You need to be able to give leadership and make plays, so it is not an easy position from the beginning. It says an awful lot about him, his confidence and intelligence, the command and respect from his teammates. And also going into the game having confidence to make big plays when the game is on the line. I think he played well tonight but you are going to see him continue to keep growing.”