



Florida State Men's Basketball
Coaches' Quotes
Florida State 81, Florida 60
Nov. 6, 2018
Donald L. Tucker Center

Leonard Hamilton
Florida State University

Opening Statement

"This game was exceptionally challenging for us because we really didn't know what to expect out of the University of Florida and we really had a lot of questions that we had to answer about ourselves. Those of you who've watched us play the last couple years, most of the time we win games not with our guys one through five, but guys six for 11 (in the rotation). We had a hard time trying to figure out how to develop a rotation against a very good basketball team. I felt our veterans really did a very good job defensively in the first half. We got an opportunity to get some of our inexperienced players in the first half and I thought they relaxed. Overall, we came back in the second half and turned it up a notch. Our defense was excellent and our rebounding too. We got out early in the second half and got some stops, we got some easy baskets and I thought we were able to maintain some momentum for the remainder of the game. Florida is a very good basketball team. They're very well coached, their coach does a great job. These types of games early in the year are very difficult for both teams. I thought our defense was a little bit better and PJ [Savoy] gave us some good looks. We got some deflections and steals, we got some easy baskets and were able to extend the lead."

On being defensive in the passing lanes

"Once again, we try to be that way, but you don't really know until you're going into a game like this whether or not they're absorbing what you're trying to teach. We try to execute defensively with close-outs and activity with our hands, try to mirror the ball and try to take away vision. Sometimes fundamentally you're not always as consistent as you'd like to be. Tonight, I thought we were very consistent because we have a tremendous amount of respect for Florida and we knew that if we weren't on our very, very best this game could've been different. The respect we have for them I thought motivated our guys and I thought they were really locked in and concentrated the whole 40 minutes."

On the team's success from three-point range

"We've had moments in practice where you're out there shooting in shooting drills and you don't have any defense on you and you see the ball going in and you get a feeling that if we can get those types of shots, more than likely we can hit a high percentage of them. The challenge for us with a team as athletic and that defends as well as Florida is for us to move the ball and create those opportunities for your teammates. I thought we did a pretty good job of moving the ball and looking for some of those guys that we thought were pretty good shooters."

On the improvements of MJ Walker defensively

"That's part of the growth process that youngsters go through. It was new for him last year and he had a lot of adjustments that he's had to make. I think you see that he's been coachable, he comes by and wants to watch film. He's attentive, he's eager to learn, he's become more and more of a sponge. He has just made his mind up that he wants to be what you call a complete player, a guy who defends and is a good offensive player on the other end so I'm very proud of the progress he's making. I thought his effort and his conditioning level was outstanding."

On getting to the line and creating opportunities

"We're just starting to figure out who we are. I'm not ready to start taking bows yet. We played a good basketball game tonight against a really good basketball team, but we still have a long way to go and we have to maintain. We still have enough memories from last year that it keeps us in check. We don't want to get too far ahead of ourselves, it's one game. We've got to enjoy this for a moment and we've got to get back to the grind on Thursday and prepare ourselves to go play on the road against a Tulane basketball team."

On how good this team can be

"I think that we can be a pretty good basketball team, but we've got to continue to keep growing. Because what happens with youngsters, most of it is mental and emotional, more so than physical. There's not that much difference from year to year. It's just that, like MJ [Walker], he's more mature and he's more focused and I think he's a little more relaxed and that's part of the growth process. Factor that into the potential of how good we can become and tonight I thought that the respect we have for the University of Florida brought us mentally and emotionally together. Sometimes we had some moments last year where we played excellent basketball and we faltered on that. That's part of the maturing process and we're hoping, we talk about it an awful lot, but we hope that we can use the things that we learned from last year. This game is an opportunity to have a little success, we hope that we can learn from that, but we also want to learn from those moments where I thought we didn't always play as well as we'd like."

On winning five in a row over Florida

"To be honest with you, I'm not really sure what that means. We've had some really good games and some of the games have been really, really close. The games could've gone either way. I remember one that we knocked the ball up in the air and scored at the end and [Dwayne] Bacon hit a shot at the buzzer. They've been hard fought games. The last two games we've kind of gotten out on, but a new coach comes into the program, getting his players and building his culture. Don't worry, Florida will be just where they've always been in a short period of time. Just give Coach White a little more time. We've got to stay sharp and understand this is one game. We got the best of them tonight, but believe me, we know that they're going to be right where they were a few years ago winning back-to-back national titles, too soon for me."

On the crowd

"I was very impressed with the students stepping in and giving us a big lift tonight. Rainy night, nine o'clock game, election night so we had a lot of distractions tonight. I've really got to be thankful to our fans. Seminoles, the sixth man in the stands came out loud and they were doing very well tonight. It's interesting for me to always feel that we've given our visitors a little taste of the same medicine I get when I go on the road. Thank you very much Seminole nation, we really appreciate it."