



Florida State 87, Winthrop 76
Tuesday, January 1, 2019
Donald L. Tucker Center
Tallahassee, Florida

Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton

Opening Statement:

"This game went the way most of our games have gone this year. We have spurts that we play really, really well and then we have spurts where we showed we are still a work in progress. I have said all along that is pretty much who we are. I thought in the first half our main emphasis was to take away the 3-pointer against a team who shoots 40 percent from out there. We did a pretty good job of that; needless to say when you play against a team whose center shoots 40 percent from the three-point line, it takes a different type of defensive pressure for our team. I thought Winthrop played to their strengths and took advantage of what may be a weakness on our part. I thought we made some really good adjustments in the first half and we went up by 16, and when we came back in the second half they made some adjustments and we had an energy dip as well. They (Winthrop) did a really good job of attacking the basket, but I was pleased to see we cut down on turnovers. Our shooting was better and I think Winthrop gave us a really good look of what it's going to be like when you play teams that can shoot the ball, but also take you off the dribble. Hopefully we will learn from that as we look toward the conference schedule, and to be 12-1 after our nonconference schedule is something to be pleased with."

On Phil Cofer's first start back since injury:

"I thought we played him (Phil Cofer) a little too long and he fatigued out on the court. We had to go small to match Winthrop, which I thought was best for our team. I was pleased with Phil and he has shown that he's getting back and knocking the rust off. We have to be careful to not over do it this early in the season and that's challenging because we are about to go into a game on Saturday against a team that went 17-1 in our league last year and is undefeated this year. We have to utilize a full complement of our players and that's going to be challenging as we go throughout the week. Terance stepped up today and did a really good job, and he gave the ball to Trent when the game was on the line and he came through for us. I still see us winning by committee and I think this team understands that Phil is important but I think we need to do what will help us be successful."

On the versatility and talent that Polite brings:

"I have said to you all since day one, the biggest challenge for us right now is that we are trying to develop our players. Our six through eleven guys are still growing and emerging and Anthony (Polite) has shown the ability to be a pretty good defender. He has been inconsistent with that and he really is a good shooter, but the mental and emotional part of getting used to playing at this level is challenging for these guys that lack experience. I thought he realized that we needed his defensive energy and I thought that made a difference in the game. He made three defensive plays and he has shown signs of playing like that, and with PJ Savoy) not having one of his best games, that is the strength of our team to be able to go to someone else, and let them make a big impact in the game. I think Anthony is a really good shooter and his best basketball is ahead of him and we need to make sure he plays with the level of confidence that we need out of him on the floor."

On the importance of getting guys experience in a close game:

"It is invaluable. You have no idea what it is like from a coaching standpoint as I'm still learning what they are capable of doing. I had a hunch that Anthony (Polite) was capable of doing what he showed us in a game that was important. He has shown us that he can be a pretty good defender and that gives me confidence that he has more confidence

and his teammates also will have more confidence in him. I think all of our rotational players have shown signs of being able to contribute, but it is just a growth process that we are going through. Now that we are into the teeth of our ACC play you don't have a lot of room for mistakes."

On the impact of Terance Mann's play today:

"Terance (Mann) and Phil (Cofer) are our two most experienced players and he realized their defensive scheme and was able to make some plays because of his maturity level and experience. "

On Florida State's 13 steals

"There was no doubt that we needed all of those deflections and steals, as this is a team that plays a completely differently style of ball. Our game was similar to how most of their games have gone, as they have played some pretty high majors and they were able to keep getting back into games because they were so dangerous with their threes. They are really quick and are very well coached. I'm sure that it will be them and Radford in the Conference Final. That term mid-major is not a term you can categorize teams into like we used to. This team is a very good basketball team and it took a lot on our part to go out and get the win, hats off to them."

On Christ Koumadje's improved rebounding:

"You have no idea how big it is for him to get eight rebounds in 14 minutes is. We have challenged him to be able to go up and get more boards and to play aggressive like he has been the past few games. You get to see him putting more emphasis on his ability to be aggressive around the rim. He has been consistent the past five games and he is understanding that is his contribution to this team. I think last year he was 70 percent healthy with the patellar tendonitis, as he was always sore and had a tough time getting up and down the floor. Today wasn't a good matchup for him as Ferguson on their team is a very good shooter, and we were able to hold him down still. The threat he gave us was challenging to Christ and I think he will be a lot better against bigger man underneath the basket. I like what I see in him, and he knows his contributions in rebounding, defending, and blocking shots. I wish we could get the ball more to him and Mfiondu (Kabengele) around the basket, and that is something we are going to work on this week in practice."