



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

Winthrop Head Coach Pat Kelsey

Opening Statement:

"I want to credit Florida State and Coach Hamilton first. I have been down here quite a bit, I was an assistant at Wake Forest for a long time and I have so much respect for what he has built here and how he has made Florida State a national power in basketball. I know the Florida State staff and it is impressive to see the edge that Florida State has this year coming off an Elite Eight appearance, but you can sense and tell that there is no satisfaction in what they did last year, and they are driven to charge toward a Final Four appearance and I believe this Florida State team is capable of that. I have a lot of respect for how hard Coach Hamilton gets his players to play, how disciplined the players are, how well schooled they are, it shows that the staff does a phenomenal job. I believe that the last eight minutes, the cumulative effect of their pressure, their ball pressure mainly, and just their length and athleticism out in the passing lanes sped us up too much. The moment when we made our big run in the second half, we made better decisions, we only turned the ball over once in the first twelve minutes of the second half, and then our team turned the ball over nine times in the last eight minutes. That is where the game unraveled a little bit for us, and that is a credit to Florida State. It is a credit to the intensity of Florida State on the defensive end, speeding our team up and making us turn it over, and these aspects served as the difference in the game.

Winthrop Coach Pat Kelsey on Florida State's depth, length, and experience

Florida State is like Noah's Ark; they have two of everything. Florida State has future professionals, NBA prospects, Florida State is long, athletic, and physical. The team plays together; they play team orientated basketball. That is Florida State's identity defensively, they want to disrupt and pressure opponents. I believe a big part of their game plan defensively was to negate our three-point game, our team's ability to shoot threes. We had twenty-three attempts, I wish we had thirty-three attempts. Florida State made that difficult on us, especially in the first half when they were staying locked in on our shooters, therefore giving us a sense of fool's gold at the rim, we were able to score at the rim because they were locked in on our shooters. In the second half, Florida State got back to who they are, that is a team that challenges every single shot at the rim. Especially late, in the last eight minutes of the game, Florida State blocked four or five shots at the rim because instead of taking what the defense gives us and finding the open three, we continued to go in there and try to score among their seven-foot bigs."

Winthrop Coach Pat Kelsey on adjustments made to enable their second half run

"Our team had better ball security, we didn't turn it over, our movements, our cutting was better, we were able to loosen them up a little bit and get some ball reversals and we were making sound plays. We were getting stops, which is a big part of our success. The first ten minutes I believe our kids did a better job with our nastiness of the defensive end, instead of taking the ball out of the net, we are taking the ball of the backboard and that allows us to get out in transition which is what we are, we are one of the fastest paced teams in the country. We are dangerous when we play faster and are able to get stops, so I think our defense picked up and our kids defended well, and we took care of the ball, those are the two things that allowed us to make that big run in the second half to get back in the game."

Winthrop Coach Pat Kelsey on Nych Smith and adjustments made based on his absence

“Nych Smith hurt his ankle in our last game, and he has worked since that moment to try to get back, but we knew as a staff going in that it would be a game time decision. This morning during warmups he came over and tried to shoot gingerly. Our staff didn’t want to risk it so about an hour before the game there was a general idea that he would not play. That is how it is, this is the reason that you have thirteen guys on scholarship, the next man up motto. This will be the grind over the next two months for Florida State in the ACC and for Winthrop in the Big South, there will be tons of ups and downs, you will have sprained ankles, chapped lips, hang nails, and other things that will go on, but guys will have to step up. I was proud our team today because we had players who did that, Charles Falden hasn’t played a lot up to this point of the season came in and had 15 points. Florida State had M.J. Walker goes down and Phil Cofer comes in and hits three threes in the first half. That is credit to Coach Hamilton, he does a phenomenal job of keeping his players on board, keeping all of them happy, which is hard with thirteen scholarship players. You only have five guys on the floor, and six through thirteen want to be in the starting lineup, and the fifth guy in the starting lineup wants to be the guy who shoot the second most shots. This is how it is and the ability to manage all of those things is a crucial part of coaching. This is why Coach Hamilton has had so much success for so long, Hamilton recruits talented players and then the staff coaches them up. I have a ton of respect of the Coach Hamilton’s program, the Florida State staff, and the players, and the they have a similar respect in the college of coaching fraternity too. There is a consensus that Florida State is going to recruit talented players. This creates a fear recruiting against them, as I know from recruiting against them in my time in the ACC, Florida State does not have Cameron Indoor Stadium to sell, but Florida States gets talented players and then proceeds to coach them up. Florida State plays the game the right way, they play disciplined, they play hard, and that is how they have become on the best college basketball programs in the country, and a Final Four contender this year.”

Winthrop Coach Pat Kelsey on the difference between this Florida State team versus previous

“I believe that you can tell by the edge that this Florida State team plays with, they are a veteran group and they have older, mature players. There is a sense that this Florida State team is not satisfied. This team went to an Elite Eight last year, and they should be throwing parades in downtown Tallahassee for what Florida State is accomplishing here. It just seems that Florida State has a team with blinders on and they are focused on doing something really special. Coach Hamilton and the Florida State staff has this program at the point where they are not satisfied and where they play with a certain edge. Florida State has great players on previous team, including Toney Douglas and Von Wafer, but this is a very talented Florida State team that is complete without many weaknesses.”