

Georgia Tech Post-Game Quotes

*Florida State (20-5, 8-4 ACC) 69, Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets (11-15, 3-10 ACC) 47
February 16, 2019 • McCamish Pavilion • Atlanta, Ga.*

FLORIDA STATE HEAD COACH LEONARD HAMILTON

Opening statement:

“Georgia Tech utilizes a defensive scheme that is probably the best match-up zone defensive scheme that I’ve seen in my coaching career. They do an outstanding job of taking away so many different spots on the floor that you normally are accustomed to operating in. Our guys understood coming into this game that if we didn’t execute of a high level of efficiency against their system that we would have a difficult time scoring. I thought our guys really were locked in. They executed very well because of the respect we have for how well they have held their opponents to not only low scoring games, but they’ve always held their opponents to low field-goal percentage. Even though they’ve not won as many games as they’ve liked, when you look at parts of the game, they’re right where I’m sure they would like to be. They were up at halftime at Duke and at our place, all I could think about was the last four or five minutes of our game when it was a three- or four-point game in Tallahassee. We stretched the lead to 10 there at the end. They had our attention. But I thought our guys responded well. I thought we executed exceptionally well on the offensive end. Their offense challenges all your defensive principles and I thought our guys were extremely locked in today and I thought they played with a lot of energy. We have three games in seven days. We went into the game wanting to have everybody go into the game and play with a lot of energy and hopefully we could spread some of our minutes around. We accomplished that today and feel very fortunate to come away with a victory.”

On Christ Koumadje:

“I think Christ has found his niche. And we’ve adjusted. Four of the last five games that we’ve played, we’ve played against people that have played zone. We’ve left him somewhere close around the basket and our guys are finding him. He’s posting strong and finishing real well. You like to see him get some confidence. Our players have confidence in him. There was a time where I think he went 0-of-6 at Miami and his teammates really challenged him and told him how important he was to our team. And that we needed him to be who is he and that we would play off of him and I think he’s responded very well.”

On getting to the corner offensively in transition:

“Yes we were trying to get into the corners, but most of the time when you get the ball into the corner, they trap you and they rotate out. I was a little nervous about that because when we got the ball to the corners in Tallahassee, we were a little indecisive and they boxed us in. [Today], I thought we spread the ball and moved the ball a little quicker and moved our bodies a little quicker and got a little separation and had some opportunities. Most of those opportunities though came in transition.”

On responding to a three-game losing streak with a seven-game win streak:

“Not to try and make any excuses, but during that period, we had three of our starters that didn’t practice, they only played in games because they had little minor injuries. Mfiondu [Kabengele], Terance [Mann] and Trent [Forrest] all were kind of having some of those challenges of a toe here, a bruised heel there and soreness on the ankle. They only could play in games. Then we had a couple kids come down with the flu and then on top of that, we didn’t shoot the ball very well. I have to give the teams that we lost to a lot of credit. We had two one-day turnaround games and we played against two teams that were ranked No. 1 in the country. So it challenged us, but I also think that during that period it told us a lot about ourselves. I thought it caused us to re-evaluate our approach to things. Sometimes if you can lose games and learn from it and build from it, that’s not all bad. You’re not going to go undefeated. We all would like to, but I thought that period, we grew up a little bit, we challenged each other and called each other out a little bit. I think that’s one reason why we got into a seven-game winning streak. I don’t know if we personally, as a coaching staff, did anything other than try to point out the challenges that we had and we got a little healthier. I think during that period of time, we grew closer together as a team.”

GEORGIA TECH HEAD COACH JOSH PASTNER

Opening statement

“Tough game. First of all, give Florida State a lot of credit. They are a very good basketball team. There is a reason they’re a top 25 team in the country. We had some struggles scoring obviously. We got into the situation where we got stagnant offensively – we were unable to score some buckets. We held them to 39 percent from the field and 30 percent from three. Usually under 40 percent is good for us. But again, offensively, it was tough for us. I didn’t know until this morning if he [Jose Alvarado] and Michael

Devoe were going to play. They've both been out the last couple of days with the flu. As of last night, they weren't playing and they hadn't been at practice the last few days. I thought Kristian [Sjolund] gave us some good minutes and some good threes. We just have to stay the course as I've told our team. We've had a tough stretch and losing is no fun. Nobody hates losing more than I do, but when things aren't going well, there can be no splintering, no negativity. You have to give Florida State credit. Our guys will continue to compete and battle, and we'll continue to work at it and stay positive. We just have to get back on the winning track and we are going to keep working at it."

On having a tough time scoring

"Scoring a lot of times comes down to athleticism. You have to have the innate ability to just score. Offense is so much of a skill and talent. We have to continue to get guys better through player development. Obviously we have to continue to recruit. But I love our team, and our guys bust their tail every day. They give us a chance. We struggle to score. That struggle to score is a direct result. I was planning on redshirting Khalid Moore. My plan wasn't to play him 20 minutes against the top 25 team in the country. And the time we lost Josh [Okogie], I knew that was going to hurt us on the offensive end. Our guys give everything they have on the defensive end and that's why when you look at every one of our games, we give ourselves a chance. We have just had a real issue with scoring."

On the impact of Christ Koumadje

"He's 7-4 [Christ Koumadje]. He's long and not as stiff. He's good and he's 7-4. He is long. James [Banks] and AD [Abdoulaye Gueye] struggled today in the paint and that hurt us. And a couple of times when we played pretty good defense, they got bailed out by throwing it up to him. Or on offensive rebound where our guys are fighting him to get on the inside of him and he just reaches over. He's just 7-4. I started AD [Abdoulaye Gueye] in the second half. I started bigger and as I have discussed many times before, we don't have as good of spacing when we are bigger."

On importance of losing Josh Okogie

"I think the biggest thing is that we lost Josh Okogie. We knew Josh was going to be very good and I had said by his junior year he was going to be an all-ACC guy and probably have a chance to leave. When you're not even top 10 in the state, a 3-star guy, you are trying to move up the needle. To lose a guy who you weren't expecting to lose after his sophomore season, and a guy who can go get you a bucket and again, there's no excuse. That's the biggest thing. I've said it many times, but it's going to be good for us in recruiting and we're going to sign guys as we head into the spring. It's going to be good for us as we move further along because it gives guys opportunities to play. It's great for Josh, it's great for Georgia Tech. And when you're building and trying to move forward and you lose a guy like that unexpectedly, it makes it tough."