



Florida State 80, Louisville 75 (OT)
Saturday, February 9, 2019
Donald L. Tucker Center,
Tallahassee, Florida

Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton Quotes

Opening Statement

"It's one of those ball games that could've gone either way. I thought the second half we became a lot more aggressive on the defensive end and were able to force some turnovers that led to some opportunities that we just were not getting in the first half. I thought they [Louisville] did a very good job of executing in the first half and we had a hard time making shots in the first half. We shot the ball poorly from the three and I didn't think that defensively we were dialed in. The second half I thought we came out a lot more locked into our defensive schemes, forced some turnovers, but then midway in the half Ryan [McMahon] came in and hit three three's in a row and kind of put us back on our heels once again. We called time out and I thought our guys regrouped mentally from it. From then on, I thought that we showed a lot of character. Louisville is a very good basketball team. They're hard to prepare for, they execute very well, they're extremely patient. They move the ball and in the first half they really made it hard for us to force any turnovers. In the second half, I thought we just turned it up a notch, forced some turnovers and got some easy baskets and that really probably made the biggest difference in the game."

On the difference in overtime

"I thought it was our defense. We made adjustments because we were not shooting the ball very well from the perimeter. We spread the floor and started to take the ball to the basket, and we got some fouls and made our free throws down the stretch. In the first half, I was a little concerned, I think we shot 57 percent from the free throw line and in the second half it was 91. That's a big difference. We were able to get the attempts. In the second half, with about 12-13 minutes to go, we were in the bonus, but we didn't take advantage of it until the latter part of the game. We didn't get the ball inside, we weren't taking it to the basket very strongly, but because their defense was so solid, we changed our attack and started just driving the ball to the basket. I think that gave us a lot of opportunities to get to the foul line and also get a couple jumpers as well."

On Trent Forrest's performance

"He's very consistent with his effort and his focus. There's no doubt that he's a leader on our team. I don't think he made a basket in the first half, but I thought that he came out in the second half and he just tried to help us find a way to win. That shows that we're a team that's fighting. They're dialed in, they're communicating with each other, their body language is excellent. Phil Cofer wasn't having one of his best games so we took him out, put RaiQuan [Gray] in. I thought that his effort there down the stretch and his leadership, he was being so verbal and calling out our defensive systems, that really made a difference down the stretch."

On Mfiondu Kabengele's performance the last few weeks

"He's growing and improving and I think he's only scratched the surface of his potential. He's really doing a nice job of being more and more confident. We're putting him in a position where he has a chance to have some success. He's really growing up and maturing and making good decisions with the ball and realizing the input he has on the team. He's patient, he's extremely aggressive, he's not losing his aggressiveness, I just think that the game is slowing down for him and he's producing a lot better."

On Mfiondu Kabengele's progress in terms of 22 points and two fouls vs. Louisville

"That's a huge sign that he's making progress. He's so important to us that he's play a starter's minutes, we're just letting him see the game and allow it to come to him. He's not as aggressive, he's fouled out of five games and the rest of the team has fouled out of three. He's playing smarter and making better decisions on the defensive end."

On how his team held up with three guys playing 40 minutes

"We didn't have much choice, we had to go with our most experienced guys tonight. I thought that made a big difference. We still have confidence in our other guys, this just was not a game that we felt that we need to play our deepness."

On the shot selection and execution

"We shot 60, 45, and 50 in three straight games from three, so I don't think we're struggling. I just think that sometimes the other team, the defenses, are doing a pretty good job. This team shot 42% for the game, the most important thing is trying to find a way to win. We shot I think 60% at Miami, we shot 40% against Clemson and shot 50% at Syracuse, so I wouldn't say we're struggling. We just didn't shoot the ball well tonight."

On the current win streak building confidence for the team

"It means that we've won six games. Nobody's going to the NCAA [Tournament] winning six conference games. We've got to keep stacking on those victories. Just like sometimes you got to learn how to handle defeats and you got to bounce back, I think you got to learn how to handle successes as well. We need to make sure we stay mature, stay focused, realize that we still have a lot of room for improvement. We can't play guys 40 minutes; we've got to get more guys involved. The residual effect of playing guys this many minutes two or three games in a row, you start wearing yourself down. We still got a lot of work we have to do. By no means have we arrived, we're still on that climb. I like the direction we're moving in, but it's not time to start celebrating or taking any bows."

On the veterans making free throws late

"The veteran guys stepped in and made the free throws. We got the technical, I think we had two guys shooting, Mfiondu [Kabengele] was one of them, so to have two guys on the court that can shoot the technical is a little bit different than what we've done in the past. Last year we shot 69% as a team, I think this year we're shooting 74-75, which makes a big difference when the games on the line like the game tonight."

On not shooting well yet still beating a Top-25 team

"That's what I'm saying, these kids just find a way to win. They're realizing that defense is important. There's no question that our defense won the game tonight, I think that goes without saying and they understand that. We haven't always been that focused on the defensive end, but I think that's part of the growth process that our guys are going through."

On the growth from the Duke game to now

"I think we've learned that we've got to try to play 40 minutes the way we played the second half. If we had really grown to the point where we could do that, then we probably wouldn't be in the situations we're in, but that's part of the journey that these guys are going through. We don't want to put ourselves in position where we've got to dig ourselves out of these holes so we've got to find a way to be more consistent for 40 minutes and not 20."