



Florida State 73, Virginia Tech
Tuesday, March 5, 2019
Donald L. Tucker Center
Tallahassee, Florida

Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton

Opening Statement

"I thought that Virginia Tech did an unbelievable job in the first half of balling us up and taking away the things we've been accustomed to doing all season. They were extremely well prepared. They wouldn't let us run any of our offensive system that we've been accustomed to, but they gave us all the three-pointers that we wanted and we took advantage of it, we took the bait. I thought our guys made some adjustments at halftime to what we were trying to do offensively, but more than anything else I thought our guys turned it up defensively and we were able to get some deflections or steals. We got some easy baskets and I thought that offensively, we were able to get a much higher percentage of opportunities in the overtime period by just making a couple adjustments of what we were doing and then it was anybody's game. The game could have gone either way, it was a nip and tuck, two teams hungry for a victory, battling going back and forth. That's typical, that's the new ACC. The team is well coached, loaded with talent, well prepared, but I was very proud of our players. I thought that to every man, I thought defensively we did the job. I thought the energy was picked up and I think they showed a lot of character by being down such a large margin in the first half and not playing very well. We could very easily have gotten discouraged, but I thought that showed that they're growing up a little. They didn't panic. We told them we thought we could win the game, we had to make some adjustments. I thought the guys responded to each other and responded to the challenge that we have them as coaches."

On If One Of The Differences Was Better Shooting In The Second Half

"I think that our defense was much better in the second half. We got better shot opportunities, but we got some deflections and steals and created some easy opportunities for ourselves. More than anything else, our defense gave us some energy and some easy baskets, and I thought that our kids executed our offense much better in the second half."

On The Seminoles' Senior Class Going Out With A Win

"Well there's no doubt that we had to challenge our whole team that we didn't want our seniors to have a bad memory of their last game at home in their college career. I thought that they responded well, I just think that the first half, we've got to give Virginia Tech a lot of credit. They did a tremendous job of taking away so much of the stuff we like to do. Their defense was excellent, could not have been any better. If we hadn't made some adjustments defensively and offensively at halftime, we very well could have been on the wrong side of this game."

On If The Experience Of The Seniors Was A Motivating Factor In The Win

"I thought that had a lot to do with it. I thought that they determined that they didn't want to lose. I thought it was a tremendous difference in our energy in the first half and their defensive execution in the second half. They showed a little that they're growing up and they understand that there are different challenges in each game, every game takes on a different personality. Today we had to turn it up defensively because they were not going to miss. This is a tremendous, the No. 1 three-point shooting team in the ACC and they're not going to miss and let you make them, that's just it. We almost blew it there at the end of regulation. I called timeout, we should have fouled and not given them that opportunity, but as it happened, we came back in overtime and were able to pull away."

On The Difference In Mfiondu Kabengele From The First To The Second Half

“I think the biggest difference is that we executed much better in the second half and he got opportunities that he didn’t get in the first half because our offensive execution, a lot in part because their defense was so good, we just didn’t give him a chance to get very much done.”

On if There Was A Moment In The Second Half Where He Felt Things Shift

“In the first half I thought that we could win the game if we just started executing better. The thing that I’m most proud of, I didn’t think any of our kids panicked. I thought they maintained their poise and responded to the different systems we gave them during the course of the game. They acted like they thought they could win this game, there was no lack of confidence or anyone being down or discouraged in the locker room. We just had to be who we were, who we are. In the first half, I thought it was uncharacteristic that there must have been at least four times that the clock ran down and we just threw it at the rim just trying to get a shot off. That’s not the way we like to play, but again Virginia Tech did an outstanding job in their preparation. It caused us a lot of indecisions.”

On The Importance Of The Double Bye In The ACC Tournament

“I’m more concerned about how we play. If you don’t get the double bye, you’ve still got to go play. It’s more important to finish fourth in the league like this, the double bye is just a bonus because we’re in the greatest basketball conference in the history of college basketball and we want to position ourselves with the best teams. The double bye is something I hope that we have the opportunity to enjoy that position, but most importantly to continue to keep getting better and prepare ourselves for the postseason. I thought that today we took a step in the right direction, I thought we grew up a little and showed a lot of character by coming back and playing a lot better in the second half as we did than in the first half.”

On The Tucker Center Crowd

“I think we gave the crowd something to cheer about. The first half they didn’t have very much to cheer about. If I was a fan, I was wondering what was going on. Sometimes you’ve just got to give the other team credit. They did a great job defensively and they were extremely well prepared. I thought we made the adjustments mentally, emotionally, physically in the second half and that was the main reason why we were able to pull off a very hard-fought victory at home for our seniors.”

On The Seminoles’ Ball Handling Late In The Game And In Overtime

“I thought they showed a lot of maturity. They made good decisions with the ball and showed a lot of confidence. We had a lot of guys make big shots and big free throws down the stretch. That’s the mark of a team that’s maturing and growing. Hopefully that will be something we can draw from as we move into the postseason tournament, but we have one more game. I’m sure that we can’t look past anybody. I’m sure you know that Duke blew Wake Forest out by one, another ACC blowout in Durham so we know we’re going to have our hands full. That team, they haven’t won very many games, but that’s just another example of what I’m talking about. You’ve got to be ready to be at your best, regardless of who you’re playing you could have your hand handed to you and show you to the door.”