

**NCAA MEN'S 1ST AND 2ND ROUNDS: HARTFORD**  
**March 23, 2019**

**Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton**  
**Senior Terance Mann**  
**Redshirt Freshman RaiQuan Gray**  
**Redshirt Sophomore Mfiondu Kabengele**

**Florida State - 90, Murray State – 62**

**LEONARD HAMILTON:** In our game preparation for Murray State, as we watched the films and saw the statistical analysis and tried to come up with a game plan, they were awful, awful impressive. And the because of the respect we have for what we had evaluated, we knew we had be at our very, very best in order to be successful.

I thought our guys really locked in. They gave all of the attention to detail. I thought we moved the ball. I thought we -- obviously, we had to stop them in transition. I thought we did a decent job of that, but we came to the conclusion that (Ja) Morant was almost basically un-guardable. So we had to make sure we defended the other guys that fed off of him. And we worked hard and made him earn all his baskets.

And I thought we did a really good job defending the other guys, and I thought that really made the difference in the game. We had scored 45 points off our bench. I thought we had tremendous help from our rotation players. And taking into consideration that two of our top players didn't play at all, I was very pleased that we were able to beat what I thought was a really good basketball team. And the score is probably not an indication of how much respect I have for them and how talented they are. I think tonight was one of those nights everything that we were doing, we were clicking and I thought our guys played really well.

**Q. Terance, how could you describe matching up on Ja both on the offense and defensive ends. How personal was this game? You showed a lot of emotion on the court. How much were you feeling out there?**

TERANCE MANN: I wouldn't call it a personal match-up or anything. I just brought the fight. What I did the night before was Google and YouTube Mike Cofer, my teammate's father who passed and just saw how hard he played, how much fight he gave on the field, and I just wanted to bring that with me. And I feel like that's what I did today. I played my heart out for that.

**Q. What does it say about this team that you guys had ten different guys score, a bunch of people with eight or more points?**

RAIQUAN GRAY: Coach Ham preaches 18 strong. That's who we are. We scored 45 points off the bench. That's the strength of our team. I came off the bench the majority of the season. With Phil being out, I'll be starting now. We just come in and bring energy. Everything we do falls behind. We get deflection stills and that leads to easy baskets. That's the main thing, come off the bench and bring the energy.

**Q. Terance, I know you were tweeting out about Phil the last few days, fund-raisers, everything for his family. What type of person was Phil and what type of person is his father and how strong is the connection between you and him and his family?**

TERANCE MANN: You know, Phil, he just brings a lot of energy. He's a funny guy, always up-tempo making us laugh as a team. He's that leader that we have. From the stories he told me about his father, they're the same. And he told me a lot of stories about when his father was playing and the stories that his father told him. And Phil embodies that and plays with a lot of great toughness just like his father, so you want to see Mike Cofer, you can look at Phil.

**Q. For any of you guys, you made 8 of your first 11 three-pointers. How much did that change Murray State's defense, and how were you guys able to take advantage after that?**

MFIONDU KABENGELE: I feel like going into every single game he played, teams try to stop our penetration. We do a really job at doing that. So when we knock down shots, it just opens the floor for everyone, and we go back to Florida State basketball. The guys who made shots, the guys who helped create shots did a really good job. Opened

the floor for everybody, gave the guys a lot of confidence. Motivated us and we continue to get stops on defense. The way we knocked down shots that first half was essential for our success today.

**Q. I wonder if all three of you could please give your impressions of Morant, seeing how it's different when you're on the floor with somebody than to see him.**

TERANCE MANN: I just think he's a great player. He can score the ball at all three levels. He finds his teammates most of the time, and that's what's hard to stop him. You never know what he's going to do, if he's going to find one of his teammates or he's going to score the ball. He's a terrific talent and has a lot of the athleticism.

RAIQUAN GRAY: Like Terance said, he's a great player. Overall he's a great passer. He does a good job of getting his teammates involved and that was a key thing for them. Making that run and beating Marquette, he got his teammates involved and had 16 assists. He's a great passer and great player overall.

MFIONDU KABENGELE: For me, personally when I first saw him in the game of battle, he is extremely quick. He can use both hands really well. He does a great job getting inside and penetrating and creating offense for his teammates. He's an overall great player and he's one of the players that is really keyed on his passing compared to other guys I've seen. So overall, he's a great talent.

**Q. Leonard, how could you describe Terance's game on both ends of court especially on the defensive end?**

LEONARD HAMILTON: Like Terance said -- Terance and Phil were very close. We had a very emotional situation when we found out about Mike Cofer. And before we came on the road trip, Phil got worried that his father was not doing very well. And coupled with the injury that he had, we had to make sure he was okay. And I think that our team decided that we were going to dedicate the remainder of the season to Mike. And I thought that had a lot to do with the emotions that he displayed tonight.

You guys probably know a lot about Mr. Cofer. I've known him now going on four years, and you know the part of him, watching him play football. And everyone who knows him talked about his character, his toughness, and the energy that he brought to the game. But people don't know how tough he really was to have to endure the fight, and the courage that you had to have to fight the disease that eventually overcame him. And he never complained. Through all of the challenges that he went through, he stood tall, and he fought it with such toughness and aggressiveness.

And when you see the way Phil plays, the way he acts, the way he responds to challenges, you see Mike Cofer. And I thought that our kids tonight decided that's what we wanted to play for, something bigger than ourselves and bigger than the game. And I think that's why you saw our guys so focused and because the unit -- our guys have created a culture where they call themselves 18 strong. They're brothers. They're family. And I think that we feed off each other. And when one's hurting, I think that we all hurt.

And I think the night was in response to the respect we had for Murray State, but also the respect we had for Mr. Cofer and we wanted him to be happy with the way we performed tonight.

**Q. Leonard, 44 points in the paint. I mean, you guys were able to just power the ball to the basket in the second half. I mean, it's pretty impressive when you think about it.**

LEONARD HAMILTON: That's kind of who we are. We've had games -- we've had periods in every game where we played well and executed well inside. We've shot the ball well from the perimeter, but we have not consistently throughout the year put it all together. Even though we've -- what, I think we went 12 or 13 out of the last 15 games. We've been fairly successful, but we still have not put it all together.

And tonight I see that kind of coming together. I think the situation with Mr. Cofer, the excitement of the Big East Tournament, knowing you have to perform or you're going home, is kind of creating the atmosphere that our guys are really locked in now.

**Q. One quick thing on Ja (Morant). I think he had four assists. I think he had one in the second half. Was that something of the game plan, so to speak? I know he had five threes, but did you want to sort of put it on the other guys to make shots and sort of let him get his?**

LEONARD HAMILTON: The game plan was to be solid on him and guard him as best you could. You saw we really locked him up in the first half that he had 18 points. We did a tremendous job. We held him down to 18 in the first half. He's just a talented youngster. But after watching all of the films, we really felt seriously that he has a good team. And we had to defend the other guys with the same level of focus that we were giving to him. And I think that made a difference in the game, the respect we had for the overall team and not wanting them to get their numbers. Because to be honest with you, I'm still not sure that we stopped Morant, and I'm not sure anybody can.

**Q. You talked about the 45 bench points. Can you talk to how balanced your team is?**

LEONARD HAMILTON: Well, that's who we are. You know, we've had nine or ten different guys lead us in scoring. Some people find that challenging and maybe a little unorthodox, but that's the way we have to play with the talent that we have in order for us to be successful and our guys have bought into that. We have a tremendous unselfish culture. Tonight Mfiondu came to me at least three times begging me not to put him back in the game because he wanted Christ Koumadje to gain confidence moving forward. Matter of fact, before I even asked him, he came up and said Coach, please don't put me back in the game. Let Christ play so he can gain confidence and move forward.

Last year when Mfiondu was playing well, I think we were playing in the Elite Eight, I tried to put Phil back in the game because Mfiondu was a freshman and he said Coach, he's playing well. Just let him stay in the game.

But we created that culture where the guys pull for each other. That's unusual in today's time when everybody's trying to get numbers to impress people. But we've created that type of culture on our team, and I think that's one reason why you see the guys playing together. They really feel that they're 18 strong, and that's the motivating factor, I think, behind the focus that we have displayed especially tonight.