

Lowell Native Is The Mann at Florida State

By Barry Scanlon

Lowell Sun

March 19, 2019

Growing up in Lowell, Terance Mann and his middle school friends envisioned playing basketball at a high level.

He attended the Bartlett School for three years and the Sullivan School for his eighth grade year.

"I remember playing in the Sullivan, the Daley," Mann said, "dreaming of being here."

Here is the NCAA Tournament.

Mann is now a Florida State University senior and a major reason the Seminoles are in the 68-team field for the third straight season.

Friends of Mann won't have to travel far to see the fourth seeded Seminoles play No. 13 Vermont in a first round game. Thursday's 2 p.m. clash is in Hartford, Conn. "I'm sure there's going to be a lot of people from Lowell there," said Mann, estimating his cheering section at 25.

A 6-foot-7, 215pound guard, Mann has had quite a career at Florida State.

He has played in 138 games, second most in program history. His .555 career field goal percentage is 15th all-time. He has scored 1,280 points, 22nd in FSU history. And he's part of the winningest class in school history.

"I feel like this year, out of all the years I've been here," he said Monday from Tallahassee, Fla., "we're playing our best basketball at the right time."

Mann is averaging 11.2 points this season, second best on the team.

Even though he's a guard, he leads the tall and athletic Seminoles in rebounding, averaging 6.4 per game. He's shooting .504 from the floor and .785 from the free throw line.

He's someone NBA teams will look to draft this June.

Mann admits he's thought about playing professionally.

Not now, however.

"I'm just lost in the moment," he said.

Florida State (27-7) has tied a program record for most wins in a season. The Seminoles reached the ACC title game, but fell 76-63 to Duke and its much heralded freshman forward Zion Williamson, who's built like a bus.

Mann said the hype surrounding Williamson is "legitimate."

"He's different. He's a different human being," Mann said.

Mann played a large role in Florida State reaching the ACC title game. In the quarterfinals, Florida State and Virginia Tech were tied in overtime when Mann hit an off-balance floater at the buzzer to lift the Seminoles to a thrilling 65-63 victory.

"I don't want to take any credit for that, because we don't really teach that," FSU head coach Leonard Hamilton told reporters after the game. "But he makes those kind of shots, and he's done it time and time again over his career."

"It's definitely one of the biggest shots of my career," said Mann. "It's more of an instinct shot. I was on the floor and I didn't get a chance to see it go in."

Ironically, another Lowell native was on the floor when Mann hit the shot heard 'round Tallahassee.

Virginia Tech sophomore guard Wabissa Bede, who grew up in Lowell before moving to North Andover, was on the court to witness Mann's heroics. (Like FSU, Virginia Tech is a No. 4 seed. The Hokies will play Saint Louis on Friday in San Jose, Calif.).

"I've known him since fourth grade," Mann said of Bede. "He's going to do well. He's young.

He got a lot of experience this year."

Mann said he's most proud of being part of Florida State's winningest basketball class.

"We're a big-time basketball school," he said.

"We play with a chip on our shoulders. A lot of people picked us to finish seventh in the ACC this year. We took that for a sign of disrespect. We finished fourth in the ACC and we started 1-4."

Thursday's game against Vermont will be Mann's seventh NCAA Tournament game. The Seminoles went 1-1 his sophomore year in the Big Dance. Last year, Florida State was one of the tournament's darlings, defeating Missouri, Xavier and Gonzaga to reach the Elite Eight. One win from making the Final Four, the Seminoles fell to Michigan.

When it came time for high school, Mann could have attended Lowell High. But at the urging of his family he went the boarding school route, attending Hillside School in Marlboro his freshman year and then Tilton School in Tilton, N.H., for his final three years.

Still, Mann continues to list Lowell as his hometown and splits time in the summer between Rhode Island and the Mill City when he's not in Florida.

Some of his teammates may be cold when they get off the bus in Hartford.

Not Mann.

He's tough. Lowell tough.