



#### **Coaches Quotes**

**Florida State 98, North Florida 81**

**Tuesday, December 17, 2019**

**Donald L. Tucker Center**

**Tallahassee, Florida**

#### **Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton**

##### **Opening Statement:**

"I thought Coach Driscoll had his team ready to play, as they were able to challenge us and stress us defensively. From fundamentals to attacking, they played tough, and anytime you get a team that is No. 1 in the nation in made 3-pointers, you know that we have to be ready for the unique challenge they offer. We had to be on our defensive game to compete against them, and I tip my hat to the UNF coaches and players that were ready to compete, as they have been on the road playing a lot of Power 5 teams, which has to be taxing on the body. As for us we have been off for a few days as we were taking exams, yet they still gave us everything we could ask for. In the first half, they shot the ball really well from the perimeter. At the half we made sure to come up with some schemes to prevent those open shots. They were able to execute really well, and get really good looks, even though our guys were playing really hard. Obviously in the second half the quality of our depth made a huge impact in the game, and our guys came out of halftime with a lot of energy, which allowed us to gain some separation. We tried to challenge our players after the game, to remind them that the full sum of our parts, which makes us a unique team, still has to play better as a total unit. We are not even close to playing at the top of our game, as we have a lot of good parts, but in order for us to be playing extremely well, all of our parts have to be working together. We showed signs of maturity tonight, as we played tremendously hard and unselfish basketball, and combining that with some pretty good defense. That gives this team something to build on. At no means have we come close to reaching our potential, as we have a lot of new guys that we are trying to work through. We got a lot of minutes tonight for our two 7-footers (Dominik Olejniczak and Balsa Koprivica), and they looked pretty good tonight. We are asking those guys to do something they have never done before, which is to be featured players, and we need them to be consistent in their execution. They responded well and made a big difference in the game, as they were able to attack the interior and open things up for our offense. We had 42 points in the paint and 41 made baskets, so it's good to see that we are sharing the ball well. The quality of our depth is certainly maturing and moving in the right direction, and we will continue to keep working on playing our style, in order to continue to be successful. Had we not played with tremendous effort tonight, I am not sure we would have come out with the win. There is no doubt in my mind that UNF is going to play in their conference championship, probably against Liberty, as I am extremely impressed with their team and coaching, and thankful to have gotten a win tonight."

##### **On the impact of having so much depth**

"The types of programs that I have had the unique opportunity to be a part of were programs that had a rich tradition (Oklahoma State, Miami, and Florida State), and because of these rich traditions and successful programs that occurred before I got there, we had to change the look of what success was for each program. We attract guys who want to be on this type of team, with a lot of depth, and these guys really buy-in to this system. We win by committee here at Florida State, and we don't have a set starting lineup throughout the season because of this unique opportunity. We make adjustments as we go, but we recognize the challenges that occur when guys come into our program when they were the #1 guy at their high school, and now they are in a program where they learn to share the ball. But I think our guys have bought in because they realize this system works for us, and as you look back over the years at our guys who have played professional ball, they have realized their dreams by buying into the system that we use."

**On the maturity and toughness of this team opening the second half**

"I think by coming out ready shows that we are making progress by developing and adjusting to who we are. The thing that pleases me most is that our starters are playing to near exhaustion, and then they have the confidence in the guys behind them to continue and do their job. That's really special, as I think any of our starters play hard enough where they know they have a couple more possessions before they need a break, and then the fresh guys come in. We have to continue to play hard and unselfish and I think when we do we will continue to be encouraged as a team, and we have to keep utilizing the full company of our bench to be successful. Tonight was a real step in the right direction."

**On teams wanting to take the style of Coach Driscoll's shot production**

"I think any coach in America would love to have guys that can shoot the three-ball like his guys can. He has done a great job of finding guys that fit his style of basketball, and when you look at their schedule, they have played all over America. They have been on the road the majority of this month, and they will go on the road to Syracuse and Dayton, before they even start conference play. They will not play anyone tougher in their conference than these teams they have already played, which gives them an advantage once they get to conference play."

**On the growth of Balsa Koprivica**

"I told my staff that I am seeing something develop there, as he is responding to the coaching, as we have been pushing him, and challenging him, and holding him accountable. He is a sponge who is eager to learn, but he has been a part of a program where he is the fourth or fifth option, so this is a massive change for him and Dominic, as we want to feature those guys every time down the court. Their job is to get the rebound and then get to the middle of the lane, so we can look for them on the push, the kick, the reversal, and the swing. They get four looks every time they come down the court, and they are not accustomed to that, so it is not easy for them to learn. In our system we want our guys to sprint to the other end and wear out the opponents, instead of letting them trot down the court, which they are used to. We need our guys to push so we can get the easy basket in transition, and wear the other team out. These guys are pivotal players in our scheme, and it's very encouraging to see these guys stepping up into that role."

You fellas have a Merry Christmas.