



#### **Coaches Quotes**

**Florida State 88, North Alabama 71**

**Saturday, December 28, 2019**

**Donald L. Tucker Center**

**Tallahassee, Florida**

**Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton**

#### **Opening Statement**

"I thought we had a really good day from the free throw line, which is certainly a positive. I would like to see us continue to attack the basket a bit more, but I thought when we drove the ball, we were better than other games this season. Devin (Vassell) and Anthony (Polite) had some good drives, and RaiQuan (Gray) had the first one of the year, as those guys were able to give us a good lift offensively. I think we showed some good pieces, but we are definitely still a work in progress; we still have some areas that we need to see growth in. I think those of you who have seen us play the last seven games, have noticed that we have given up a lot of dribble-drives into the lane, and I thought today we got better at that, and made that less effective for them. I love the attitude I'm seeing from our guys, as we continue to get better and keep working hard. We don't have a lot more opportunities to improve, as we conclude our non-conference schedule, and now we have 18 games in the best conference in America. Our next game is Tuesday at 12 o'clock and obviously we remember how tough it was to play against Georgia Tech, as it reminded me of a root canal, with how tough they were. Last year it was a dogfight the whole game, and they are coming off a very successful tournament in Hawaii, as they have gotten back two of their starters, so we know they are improving. It is going to be a typical ACC battle, and they certainly have our attention."

#### **On the Seminoles' perfect free throw performance**

"It is really important for us to be a good free throw shooting team. It shows that our guys have locked themselves in the gym for a while and put in the work, and it also has to do with confidence in themselves. When you spend a lot of time working on your craft, and perfecting your shooting arm motion, it gives you a lot more confidence when you get to the line. I was very impressed with the perfect free throw shooting percentage in today's game. I would love for us to get to the foul line some more, especially when you are bigger and stronger than our opponent. 17 free throws are not a lot of attempts, and we need to continue to drive more to the basket, to continue to succeed."

#### **On the Seminoles' defensive adjustments to contain the dribble drive**

"I think we showed some signs of improvement today in that aspect of our game. You have to have the right cushion, study your opponents, and understand each player's tendencies. We have to continue to execute the defensive fundamentals, and we also have to pay attention to what ways the 1-5 guys like to drive to the basket. Sometimes in a game, you lose focus of each player's tendencies, and that's when you give up easy baskets. Today I thought we locked in a little better to these individual tendencies, and it certainly helped that they didn't have any left handed players. We did employ a hedge on the ball screen, that we haven't used all year, and that certainly helped our game. Now that we have the confidence to demonstrate that defensive fundamental, I feel better about that. We also contained the dribble a lot better, and were able to move our feet on defense, and then shrinking gaps of the hole. We had more help defense today, so thumbs up on that aspect of play today."

#### **On the team letting off the gas pedal after building a 30-point lead**

"I thought they made three 3's that we did not contest well, but I also thought we had a lot of really good offensive opportunities, that we unfortunately just did not finish. Our rotation guys who come into the game off the bench, looked a bit anxious and were not completing their plays. In the game of basketball, you have to always be focused

and not give them those opportunities. And then from a maturity standpoint, we have to finish those opportunities, and we need to continue to contest their shots, and not get relaxed on the defensive end. I was happy on the team's mindset and pleased with them for a large period of the game, but unfortunately when you are trying to build an elite team, you have to be focused for the whole 40 minutes. We are not quite there yet, but we showed signs of moving in the right direction."

**On the progression of Balsa Koprivica and Patrick Williams**

"What we are trying to do is allow them to mature and improve at a normal rate, without the pressure. They are capable of impacting the game, and we want their maturation to be comfortable for them. We are pushing them to be factors in our season, and I think they have shown they are capable. We want them to continue to get better, as they looked more comfortable today, and we are continuing to work on consistency with them. I am glad to see that they look comfortable. Malik played with more confidence today, and I was also pleased with the effort of (Anthony) Polite, and him recognizing progress when he has the ball in his hands at the point. I think we are also seeing progress with RayQuan Evans, as he missed seven weeks, and he is kind of starting to look like he understands and is in control when he is out there on the court. We are certainly making progress, and we understand this is a process when you are trying to integrate six new players into your rotation. Now we head into a conference schedule that they are going to have to be ready to play well every single night."