



Coaches' Quotes

Florida State 70, Georgia Tech 58

Tuesday, December 31, 2019

Donald L. Tucker Center, Tallahassee, Florida

Georgia Tech Head Coach Leonard Hamilton

Opening Statement

"There is no doubt that Georgia Tech was very well prepared. I thought their kids (Georgia Tech) matched us with their enthusiasm and energy in the first half, the game could've gone either way, I thought they were very well prepared. I thought we had an excellent game plan but we kept making adjustments to each other. They were in control of the tempo but I was very pleased that our guys were focused. We set a (team) record tonight, I think we made 275 passes, usually we try to make 240 or 225 to move the ball but their matchup zone defense created a situation where we had to move the ball in order to find high percentage shots. There were periods late in the second half where I thought our guys were really locked in, they executed and got some stops, and we made some energy plays. I thought the fact that (Devin) Vassell was running hard in transition, was able to get a run out basket -- the fact that Malik was able to get a run out basket, Patrick was able to rush to the basket and get a tip in -- that's what happens when the quality of your depth is involved as much as it was. And our guys were a little fresher during the tough period where I thought we were able to break the game open. Dominik I thought was able to give us good effort and one of the reasons was because he didn't have to play for so many minutes and he was coming off of a virus and losing 15 pounds and it was somewhat challenging but we were able to spot him minutes and he was able to come in and contribute without having to play major minutes. I thought in the second half, even though he was able to score more in the first half, the second half he played more physical, and I thought with the two big strong guys they had he was able to neutralize their size and we were able to come away with a victory. This is life in the ACC, when you can have two guys out like Balsa (Koprivica) and M.J. Walker, guys who are instrumental and very important to our rotation and other guys step up and raise their head, you see that we are making progress and our guys are utilizing the full complement of all our players in order for us to be successful. I've been saying for a number of years that our system is such that you have to win games by committee and I thought it was very evident today. That was one of the reasons that I thought we were able to pull this one out. I thought I guys came together and everyone contributed, even Nate (Jack) coming off the bench and giving us a basket that was important in the first half. I thought Patrick (Williams) made some good plays for us, he showed that he is growing. Balsa came into the game and he had a big play for us, but that was the play he got hurt on. You like to see those types of things, hopefully this will be something that gives us a bit of confidence as we look towards playing in one of the best college atmospheres in the history of college basketball in Louisville next week, so we can enjoy this for a moment and then we need to turn our focus towards what we know is one of the most difficult places in America to play (at Louisville)."

What was the difference in the second half when guys were able to make that run?

"I thought the quality of our depth kicked in and I thought our guys responded well, too our game plan. We played a little zone and we never use zone, we used a couple different offensive systems that we normally don't ever use that I thought were different than what we usually do and we got a couple baskets out of that. I thought we executed our zone offense a lot better. For some reason we had a hard time getting the ball to the baseline the first half and then we executed a little better of what we normally do, got the ball to the baseline and I thought that gave us some drives to basket and got us to the free throw line. I thought we tried to attack in the first half when they went man to man without reversing the ball. Other words the defense was set and we'd throw it to the wing and tried to make plays and normally against a real good defense that's a little more challenging than moving the ball off of one side of the floor to the other, at least moving people around they are not quite as set, the first half I thought we were

going against the teeth of their defense, the second half I thought we moved the ball much better and we were able to create some help and recover situations that gave us a couple lobs and a couple drives to the basket and I thought out guys just aligned themselves to be coached and make the adjustments that you normally have to make in a game because people are going to make adjustments too you that's just the way the league is. They have all your film, and all your tendencies so you have to have a plan a, plan b, and sometimes even plan c or d."

The flagrant foul provided you all with the opportunity the stretch your lead out...

"No doubt about that and that's a great point. The fact that we were able during the most critical parts of the game to maintain our composure and stay focused with a positive level of communication with each other and with the coaching up so our team is growing up and maturing a little. Early on we had 6 new guys who were listening and nodding their heads but they were never really real sure what we were expecting of them, now I think that we have a better level of communication with our newer guys and I think that's one of the reasons we were able to pull this one out today."

What's the status of M.J. Walker and Balsa Koprivica moving forward?

"M.J. has a bruise that we are hopeful will be a lot better. Balsa just had a typical fall and another bruise, because he took a tough fall and got some soreness, I don't think there is or we are anticipating any fractures or anything but how soon that soreness gets out is different with everybody. M.J. got hit on his hip bone in the last game and has been sore all week and we were hopeful it would be well enough for him to play today but he couldn't and that's the challenge you have when you're playing a non-contact sport like basketball."

On utilizing Florida State's depth

"There is no doubt that we have worked long and hard with the same philosophy that we win games by committee and that each one of the guys will have an opportunity to make a difference in games. We have high character guys who have bought into sharing the ball and sharing playing time. They are doing it with a positive attitude and if we continue to stay in that frame of mind I think that we can continue to keep getting better."

How impressive is it that Devin Vassell is able to maintain the energy he has on both sides of the court for so long in the game?

"I didn't like playing Devin or Trent (Forrest) that many minutes in the game, I think Trent played 35 minutes which we should never do that and Devin played 34 but I think a lot of that is that M.J. was out. I went with our more experienced guys. I hope we don't have to do that very much because three or four games like that will take its toll on us. But I was glad to see him stay focused and make a big play towards the end. It's not easy to run up down the floor and catch lobs when you've been playing for 30 minutes. The wear and tear is extremely challenging at this level, it shows that he is growing up and maturing and accepting the challenge. Finding that it factor, that is sometimes elusive at this level, the energy to play through fatigue is refreshing to see our guys grow up like that."

Florida State blocked eight shots in the first half, nine for the game. What kind of effect does that have a game?

"You feel good that you were able to get right blocks and you are concerned that your defensive is breaking down as they are about to score and you have to come out of nowhere and to make those types of plays (blocked shots). We have got to do a better job of defending out on the floor so we don't get caught in those situations. Our length and athleticism plays a part in that and that's why we try to recruit long and athletic guys. If I remember, most of our blocks were not from our post people; a lot of them were from our perimeter guys. I'm glad to see them having the energy and aggressiveness and determination that when you're in those situations you can go make a play. I thought that was something we haven't been consistent doing and I'm pleased to see that we have that type of potential when things break down to go make those types of plays that will make a difference in the game because in the first half those blocks were important. It was a 2 or 3-point game and we needed every one of those blocks."