



Coaches Quotes

Florida State 98, North Florida 81

Tuesday, December 17, 2019

Donald L. Tucker Center

Tallahassee, Florida

North Florida Head Coach Matt Driscoll

Opening Statement

"I think the one thing that you people have heard me speak before and I've talked to a lot of you guys before because we've played Florida State a lot from inside the state, it's a very very difficult task to do what our young men are charged to do and when you play six or seven of these games every season. It's just a fine line, it's such a fine line. It was 26-23 and we made some back-to-back threes and kind of got back into it a little, kind of got our mojo and next you know it's 40-28; then it's nine at the half. We come out in the second half with the ball with a chance to maybe cut it to six with a three, we end up turning it over back to back and now you're down 13 and you're sort of like salmon all the time going uphill and when you're going up stream trying to fight against everything usually you are your worst enemy, which we are. When you get 10 turnovers in the first half, if you turn that around and get five more threes the way we shoot the ball, next thing you know it's a different ball game. The thing about your team that is different and I really really like is that you guys have multiple players at every position that look the same and play the same, so you have multiple guys that can start, like you probably have nine starters if you wanted to and I think that's a credit to their staff and I think that's a credit to their team for accepting those particular minutes and those particular roles as they move forward. Obviously, Trent (Forrest) has to play a ton because Trent is phenomenal since I saw him as an eighth grader playing football, he's phenomenal. MJ (Walker) obviously is a little different breed because of his ability to make it from deep and get to the cup. I saw him when Miami offered him as a ninth grader in football, so I've known these kids for a long time. And Devin (Vassell), we had on campus, trying to get Devin and he had maybe not the greatest game in the world tonight, but at the end of the night he's such a great scorer at all the levels that he plays at. He can score outside, he can score at the rim and because you swarm so much defensively you turn things around so quickly and the buckets, it makes it really really tough. You guys can fight through the three things we're dealing with right now, which is attrition, we had a guy retire because he can't play anymore; illness, JT Escobar, local kid, was just sick as a dog and couldn't play, couldn't get on the floor tonight; and then injury, and those three things, you guys are prepared for which is the hardest thing in January to coach against. You guys should extremely happy about what is going to transpire for your season because you guys have a chance to be special. "

On what the team can learn from this game going into Syracuse next

"You know me, I'm not a moral victory guy and I can't stand losing. I hate losing way more than I enjoy winning which is sad. When you play these kinds of games, the thing is with the pressure, you can't simulate it, I can't simulate that in practice every day. There are a couple teams in our league that try to do this as well, so at least there is a correlation between now and when that occurs. Now you go to Syracuse, who is going to play that big zone in the big dome, and then you play number ten Dayton, that's our next couple games and then we get to play in the league, so we have four road games in a row after going five and zero at home. I have to make sure that our guys' mentalities are in the right place as we transition through that because the league is the most critical. It's a one bid league, obviously March is the most important because you have to win three games. It doesn't matter if you finish eighth or if you finish first, it does matter in our league because you get home court, but my point is it comes down to three games in March. We have to continually wash this out and then prepare for what is going to transpire next. I've been doing this so long, for eleven years, this is like our seniors' 22nd high major game and I told them that too. Syracuse

is next and we'll see what the video shows but we're going to shoot threes and we're going to shoot a lot of them and I'm proud of that. That's the thing I tell our guys, be proud that we can shoot the dog out of it and just keep getting them because we're going to be special shooting that thing."

On the team's focus on shooting threes as part of their game plan

"It evolved during our championship run because of a six foot nine kid named Beau Beech who is a guard, he's playing exactly like Carter Hendrickson, exactly like Carter. So once it evolved we just recruited straight to it, so we're going to try to lead the country every year in made threes, we're going to take as many as we can possibly take, somewhere between 30 and 40. We took 42 on Saturday, 34 today and I don't care what it is, like as long as it's good. I thought we took a couple tough ones tonight, but as long as it's a good one and we ended up putting them away. Look at Wofford and how they put North Carolina away, they made two huge threes, but it wasn't like they were late-clock threes, that's what they do, they're like us a little bit. So because we're bred like that, you have to understand that those are great shots, just step up and knock them down so we're going to do that. We're one of the best free throw shooting teams in the country and one of the best three point shooting teams, however we're also top 20 in rebounding too and we're top 10 in assists, so the rebounding part is the part that's frustrating but sometimes when you're playing against these kind of cats. That's what screws up our numbers too, like Florida, Iowa, Creighton, Florida State, Syracuse, and Dayton, like that skews your numbers some. We try to look at reality, one-bid leagues look at those numbers versus one-bid leagues."