

## **Once Again, FSU Basketball's Trent Forrest Finds A Way To Win**

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Rarely will Trent Forrest overwhelm you with his offensive output.

He has his moments to be sure. The second half against Gonzaga in the Sweet 16 last year. Those possessions late in games — and there have been several in his career — where he gets in the paint and hits a clutch shot. The flying-down-the-court dunks.

Those have been a part of Forrest's game at FSU since he arrived at FSU.

But games like Wednesday night against Virginia ... that's what makes Trent Forrest so special. That's why he will likely end his career as the all-time winningest player in Florida State history (sorry, Terance Mann).

Forrest hit one basket from the floor the entire night. And that came in the first minute.

He finished with five points against the reigning national champions. And five turnovers.

And yet he managed to have a huge impact on the Seminoles' 54-50 win over the Cavaliers.

Forrest recorded seven rebounds, seven assists, four steals and two blocks.

"He's a stat-stuffer," FSU head coach Leonard Hamilton said. "That's Trent's M.O. since he was a freshman. He's such an unselfish guy. He never loses his poise. He's confident. He knows he's capable of scoring. He scored 3,000 points in high school.

"But he makes winning plays."

Like Mann before him, Forrest is one of the main reasons why this FSU program has become so special.

They aren't the flashiest of offensive players — like Dwayne Bacon or Jonathan Isaac or even Devin Vassell. They don't typically take over games with an array of shots from all over the court.

They just do the little things, ALL of the little things to win games.

Take for instance Wednesday night.

Forrest was having a woeful night offensively. He missed his final five shots from the floor. He missed a number of driving layups, which are shots that he normally hits. He also got stripped multiple times driving to the paint. Big deal.

With the game on the line, Trent Forrest did what Trent Forrest does. He made winning plays.

With the Seminoles trailing 47-44 with 2:37 remaining, Virginia got the ball down low to Braxton Key. He pump-faked. Both FSU defenders went up. It looked for all the world like he going to be free for another layup to give the Cavaliers a late five-point lead.

Instead, Forrest blocked him from behind. Ten seconds later, Anthony Polite was burying a 3-pointer from the corner to tie the game.

"That was huge," Polite said of the Forrest block. "We look for defense. That's what we preach every day. And he was able to make it happen."

Forrest wasn't done, though.

On the Cavaliers' next possession, with the game tied, his pressure defense forced a 10-second call on Virginia. Florida State got the ball back. Forrest attacked the rim again, was fouled and calmly made both free throws.

The fact that he missed the front end of a one-and-one a few moments later — it rimmed out and Forrest, who has made numerous clutch free throws in his career at FSU, seemed genuinely stunned — didn't matter at all. Vassell hit a dagger 3 from the corner on the next possession.

"Trent's our leader offensively and defensively," Vassell said. "I mean, you could tell he started to get frustrated a little bit, but he didn't let that affect him on the defensive end. He kept getting stops. He had some big stops for us, getting that 10-second count and just getting some steals."

It's been said and written a lot: Great teams find a way to win even when they don't play well.

The same applies for players: The great ones find a way to impact a game, find a way to leave an imprint, even when they don't shoot well.

Trent Forrest won't go down in the record books as an all-time great scorer for FSU. He's definitely not an all-time great 3-point shooter.

But he's an all-time great Seminole. And he's a terrific college basketball player.

He proved that again on Wednesday night in helping No. 9 FSU improve to 15-2 overall and 5-1 in the ACC. Even though he made only one basket.

"Nothing that he does surprises me," Hamilton said with a smile. "We kind of go how he goes."

And in case you haven't noticed, FSU has been going pretty well here lately.