



## **COACHES QUOTES**

**FLORIDA STATE 54, VIRGINIA 50**

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2020**

**DONALD L. TUCKER CENTER, TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA**

### **VIRGINIA HEAD COACH TONY BENNETT**

#### **On opening statement and reflecting on self-inflicted wounds:**

"I think that the end of the first half was hard, I really challenged our guys to be attack orientated and aggressive offensively because of how good Florida State's defensive pressure is and their ability to switch, on ball, off ball, over play the passing lanes, so we tried to open up the court, get inside the lane and make plays. I thought our guys had for the most part the right mentality, defensively the team didn't lay down, they fought. The next step that the staff keeps preaching is seasoning this effort with more discipline and more soundness. Defensively, our guys kept getting lifted, and they (Florida State) got in there, and at times we played really good defense. Offensively, you have to have that attack mentality against them, and at times we would come to a jump stop and make the play, and attack. The self-inflicted wounds hurt, you see it even with the last two, the ten second call and the turnover where we thought we had Mamadi (Diakite) on the seal, but that is a credit to Florida State. The atmosphere was really good with the fans and the students, and the pressure that they put on you, whether on-ball pressure, or spreading you out and making you work, so that was part of it and the other part was some unsound plays on our part. It is hard to beat a team like that, and I think this is one of Coach Hamilton's very good teams. But we had a chance, and those self-inflicted wounds sting, but you look at it and take some of the positives and move on and keep trying to grow as a team. I think our inexperience shows at times and that is a lot to overcome, but the team didn't back down in terms of their effort and trying to stay in it where they could've, so we as a staff will build on that."

#### **On three consecutive losses and the message to the team:**

"I used the quote that I used often with them throughout this year, that "it takes courage to not get discouraged". You can't be soft, you can't get discouraged, you can self-reflect and get disappointed, and you can look at yourself and we can look at ourselves and address areas where we have concerns and understand that we will keep working on it, but don't you dare get discouraged. I told the team that you have to be strong and tough mentally, and this is a new territory for a lot of these guys, that just the situation that it is, but we have to turn around, and play Georgia Tech this weekend, so you don't have time to get discouraged. I don't know how the mind of an 18-23 year-old works, but it is my job to try to get the team ready, to encourage them, challenge them, and push them and repeat, over and over."

#### **On if Florida State's defense was the deciding factor:**

"For sure. They forced us into 18 turnovers and their pressure bothered us at times. There were some unforced errors and self-inflicted wounds. Those were some of the things that we had control over, but it's their pace that gets you a little frantic. It takes a strong and composed mind and skill level to not get rattled from that. I have brought in some veteran teams with elite guards, and we've gotten rattled at times and had just maybe enough big plays or threes to win. I understand what their defense does, and I think it is even more unique this year with what they are like."

#### **On trying to prepare for a team as deep as Florida State:**

"You try to prepare the best you can, but you cannot mimic or replicate that kind of pressure in practice. We've got some of our practice guys and managers out there who obviously are not as quick and athletic as some of those guys that Florida State has. You try to over train your players, use extra guys, you get on them, and let them foul. You do

anything to make it frantic and hectic to prepare the best that you can. There are not a lot of teams that can do that, but they (Florida State) are definitely one of the best ones. They did it to us last year in the conference tournament.”

**On what the message to sophomore guard Kihei Clark after an up and down game:**

“I told him before that his plate is full, and it is overflowing in terms of what is required from him for us to be successful. You got to guard, handle the ball, make decisions, and score. At times you are going to struggle and look rough, and other times it is going to look good. I promise you it will one of absolute best things for your career as a player. I am going to hold him accountable and challenge him, but, on the other hand, like I said I am going to encourage him and keep him staying after it. I know it and he knows what it takes for us to win and that he needs to do a lot for us to win.”