



#### **Coaches Quotes**

**Florida State 65, North Carolina 59**

**Monday, February 3, 2020**

**Donald L. Tucker Center, Tallahassee, Fla.**

#### **Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton**

##### **Opening Statement:**

"I thought Coach Williams really had his team ready to play. We've played against maybe I think four straight teams that played more of a contained type defense and North Carolina typically plays a really pressured type defensive system and I thought they routed us a little bit in the first half. I thought it was a little unsettling to our guys. They made some live ball turnovers that gave them some easy opportunities to get out in transition. They were so aggressive, I thought that they just created some indecision on our part, and I don't think we handled it very well until the last few minutes of the first half and we made some plays to at least go up one point. In the second half, I thought we did a much better job and we had a lot of guys make major contributions. I always use the term that we win games by committee and I look down and see the effort that RayQuan Evans came in and obviously M.J. Walker was a little slow with an ankle turn, the reason he didn't start. Vassell didn't have his typical offensive night. I thought he rebounded well, had four or five blocks. Malik Osborne didn't play especially well in the first half but came in and made contributions. I think our team is finding ways to stay reverent. The good thing about our team as I see it is that we still have a lot of room for growth. We still got six new guys, you can tell that sometimes we sputter a little bit but this team can continue to keep working and developing, adjusting to these types of moments but as we move through the remainder of the year hopefully we can have something to be proud of at the end of the season. I take my hat off the North Carolina they gave us everything that we could ask for and then some, for a team that seems to be regrouping and dealing with a lot of injuries. We all go through these periods as coaches where it seems as though those, I call, basketball demons raise their ugly head and they turn an ankle here and a little meniscus over here and an injury over there. Part of what you go through from time to time as coaches even though Carolina is probably one of the most rich tradition programs in the history of college basketball, I'm very confident that they'll get back on their winning ways and they almost did that tonight."

##### **On the lift that Patrick Williams provided:**

"He is a superior athlete and he has the ability to go get rebounds in crowds, and has the fast twitch muscles that he can spring up in an instant and get a nice uncontested shot. Even though he was only credited with one block I thought he made a big difference in getting his hands and changing shots. For a guy that's six eight, we don't have those seven-foot rim protectors that we've had, Pat makes up for that. I thought Dominik gave us a little of that but the combination of him and RaiQuan (Gray) and Malik (Osborne) I thought the game was solid with an inside presence. Pat is kind of growing up in front of our eyes. He was less hesitant, he was extremely aggressive, he was alert and he played with a lot of confidence tonight. That just shows the progress he's made."

##### **On the defense's ability to contain Cole Anthony:**

"You don't really contain a guy like that. He's just only been back for a couple of games and there is an adjustment period that he has to go through. I'm sure our guys gave him all of the defensive effort that they could, but I think it was a little bit of both. I think our guys did give him as much attention as possible. He's a very, very good player and he's going to have those nights where he is going to be capable of going off and being much more productive than he was tonight. Our defense didn't do anything particularly different than was we normally do. Out of respect for

him we tried to limit him as much as possible, but I just think that overall we didn't do anything different. I thought the energy and their system was defended very well by our players and it's one of those nights that we came out on top."

**On if the team is hitting their peak:**

"We're so far away from peaking I can't even see the top. We're a long ways away. When you see how we didn't adjust very well to the pressure in the first half- they forced us into turnovers. I don't know how many points they scored off of turnovers in the first half but that was because we didn't handle their pressure, their ability to overplay and get in the passing lanes. We didn't do a very good job. So we have a lot of room for growth, I think that were still a work in progress and that's probably the most positive thing that I take away from where we are- we're still working and still developing, and while we're doing it we find ways to have another ACC blowout, five or six points."

**On the impact of the sold out student section:**

"What's our record at home in the last two years? It's 60-3 and I think that's because of the fans giving us tremendous support and I hope they keep coming. They mean an awful lot to our players, and the atmosphere that's growing here in the Tucker Center. There's no doubt that they're welcome, appreciated, and I hope they keep it going."

**On if Seminole players were selfish during first half scoring droughts:**

"I thought that we just didn't handle their pressure and you've got to North Carolina a lot of credit. They had a lot to do. That's our indecision or our inability to handle the moment. They really, really did a great job on Devin (Vassell). They didn't leave him very much at all. They weren't going to let him get to normal wide open looks that he had, and I thought the big guys inside were extremely physical. While we were switching one, two, or five on them, I thought they made us pay. They had some high-low plays and we were in there scrapping and got some fouls. They got to the foul line, but that's the challenge that the other team that big and strong and talented will give you. I thought that we just kind of hung on and then we went down by about six or seventh and then we had that little sprint at the end of the half and gained some confidence at the end of the first half. I thought the second half we came out and played a little better."

**On the defensive stretch in the second half that forced 17 missed UNC shots:**

"I'm glad you told me that because I didn't know that. I thought every shot was going in. That says a lot about our guys being locked in, and giving them the proper respect. If we're not defending them with that type of focus, they were going to make us pay. We're very very fortunate to have a period like that, that makes a huge difference in a game that is decided by five or six points."

**On the defense's overall performance:**

"Those guys [Devin Vassell, Patrick Williams, Trent Forrest] have great anticipation, they have long arms, they are extremely aggressive and they take a lot of pride in their 'junkyard dog-defense.' We'll have to pull out our mascot- his name is Stopper. I think they're taking pride in understanding that we've got to get better in all areas of the game. The most impressive thing about this bunch is that they play unselfish, they defend, and they play hard. They give tremendous effort, and they're all connected. They cheer for one another, and they realize that we have a unique opportunity. I think we're in a place that not very many Florida State teams have been this time of year. What we want to do is grow with the moment, and understand that in order to maintain this level of consistency we have to get better and better and better because when you're in this position, you get everybody's best shot. You have the bullseye on you. It's interesting to see how our guys have mentally and emotionally adjusted."