



## Coaches Quotes

**Florida State 99, vs. Miami 81**

**Saturday, February 8, 2020**

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

## Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton

### Opening Statement:

"I thought Miami came out with the right game plan to put the game in the position where they had the game extremely interesting in the first half. I've gone through periods where we've had injuries and you have to keep making adjustments. They (Miami) were without their starting center; so they were very smart with making adjustments realizing that we don't quite have the rim protection that we've had in the past with the long lanky guys that normally discourage drives in the paint and alter a lot of shots. So they elected to just drive the ball and we had a hard time with our defensive system containing the dribble in the first half. They almost scored at us at will; they shot a very high percentage the first half. The second half, I thought our guys did a much better job containing the dribble, and I thought that made a big difference in the game, it gave us an opportunity to get some stops. On the offensive end, obviously we shot the ball very well from the perimeter, I thought our shot selection was excellent. We fought a lot harder on the boards than we did down in Coral Gables, they out rebounded us by I think 14. Today our guys were focused for the most part and concerned themselves with getting extra shots as well as when they did miss getting the extra rebound. The defense adjustments in the second half I thought made a tremendous difference, if you look their field goal percentage was very high offensively in the first half, in the second half I thought our guys did a much better job containing. We can enjoy this victory for a moment, a few hours, then obviously we have a very important game coming up Monday. On the most traditionally rich programs in the history of college basketball, and we will enjoy this for a little bit and then obviously we will start preparing for that game."

### **You've talked in the past about how many ACC Games are decided by 4 or 5 points, this one, you made a difference in the second half. Was it the offensive difference that was able to blow it open?**

"I think you see the maturation in some of our players. Wyatt Wilkes now plays with extreme amounts of confidence, he steps in there, knows his role, and he's giving us some productivity when he comes in the games. You see Patrick Williams a lot less hesitant, a lot more confident shooting the ball, taking the ball to the basket and pounding the ball, surely, he's growing up. Raquan Evans, who had a torn hamstring earlier in the year, and real to be honest with you it's been a struggle for him just trying to get in game shape, but you see him coming around, and too his credit he is coming into the game and giving you everything he has while he is in there and he's asking to come back out of the game and that's the unselfish spirit that this team has. Dominik and Balsa are giving us pretty good effort but we need them to get a little bit back on their game, they both had to endure injuries and I thought they lost their confidence a little bit but the good thing about this team is that we are finding ways to win games, today was a larger margin, but I think a lot of it's because the rotation players came in and gave us a tremendous amount of energy and lift and that pays off towards the end of the game and in the second half. We got off to a slow start in the beginning of the game, we are going to have to make some adjustments there, we are not going to have the luxury

of being down 14-2 as we move through the remainder of the year, I am sure we are going to figure that out here in less than 24 hours.”

**Trent Forrest and Devin Vassell didn't play as much as they usually do is that you trying to keep them fresh?**

“Trent is playing too many minutes, that's no doubt about that, and a lot of that is because (RaiQuan) Evans had been hurt. It took him awhile, and we were playing a lot of close games, so I kind of have stuck with him (Forrest) a little longer than what I had planned. (Anthony) Polite started shooting the ball better, so we didn't use him as much at the point. I would like very much to cut their minutes down a little bit and still win the game, you know, and there were some opportunities to do that because the guys who went in for them were playing pretty good. We were able to rest MJ (Walker) when he had a couple fouls with the other guys coming in, Patrick (Williams) and Wyatt (Wilkes) giving us some solid performances while they were in, that's what we are trying to do. The way we play as aggressive as we are on the defensive end and trying to be as aggressive as we can on the offensive game, it's hard to play extended minutes when you have that type of system. Actually Trent would pick the ball up going up court and we handled it on the defensive end and we were trying to push it on the offensive end, I am trying to find ways to take a little of that load off for those guys, MJ, Devin, and Trent.

**Last week, you had the Saturday, Monday turnaround and you've got two games like that this week. Is there something that the guys learned from this week and how much of a toll does it have on their bodies?**

“That's one of the things, that if I could change anything with college basketball, I wouldn't want to play three games a week, and I would never want to play a game with one-day turn-around. That's one of the things that is tremendously taxing on these young men, and we have three of them (one day turnarounds), and just by coincidence, one was North Carolina, the others are Duke and Louisville. By coincidence, it just happens that way. And I'm sure that the way things go, sometimes that's the luck of the draw. Those are three of the top teams traditionally in college basketball, but we all have to go through it. I am not putting us at any disadvantage to any other team in the league, but I do think it's extremely tough on our guys. So tomorrow, it'll be more walk through; more mental preparation than anything else. But we are at a point in the season, where I'm not really sure in 24 hours we are going to shoot a lot better or jump a lot higher, but what we have to do right now is mentally lock in and go through our game plan, and go execute. It happens to be during a real, real tough part of the year. Duke is going to play Carolina tonight and I am sure they are going to spend a lot of energy as well, but that's the nature of what television has done to the sport. That's a good problem to have when you play one-day turnaround games, so you can play Big Monday and get all the exposure that all these kids grow up wanting in the first place, so as the young folks say, I guess it's all good.”

**Did the tip dunk Raquan had in the first half was that the explosiveness you were looking for?**

“Yes, no doubt about that. He's really a good shooter, he's a great decision maker. He does a great job finishing, and if you notice on the court, he's getting guys in huddles and he's vocal with his teammates. He's more confident now in terms of understanding our system, being able to communicate that as a point guard is supposed to with his teammates. He's talking more, he's getting them in the huddles, correcting them, and encouraging and reminding them of things we have in our game plan; I'm really happy to see that.

**The team always speaks very highly of you guys like Harrison (Prieto) and Justin (Lindner), it's good to see them get a chance to be rewarded and get some admiration from the crowd when there is an opportunity.**

“I think T. Light (Travis Light) adds a little bit today, that's what we call him T. Light, Travis. These guys have such great relationships and they get so excited with our green team. They prepare us very well and Justin turned the ball over, and they were really ragging him because he talked so much trash in practice because they couldn't guard him.

He really does a good job so, Harrison (Prieto), T. Light, we're always happy to get those guys in the game and in an ACC contest."

**This marks your 354<sup>th</sup> career win and ties you for fifth all-time career wins among ACC coaches. Have you had any tips or secrets to your success?**

"If you had not mentioned that I would never know it. That's not that important, what's important is that these young men enjoy the experience they are going through. They are growing up, they're teenagers. On to become young adults, there is a lot that goes into that. At this point in my career those are just numbers, but the experience that these guys are having will be memories of a lifetime. Relationships that they'll be calling each other and, in each other's weddings, and godfathers of their kids, that's what this is all about. Getting an education, maturing, and enjoying their experience. At this stage of my career it doesn't really matter to me that much, but it is good for our staff, it's good for our program and our school, that we are able to go out and represent in a very positive way. That's really, really important, we want to put basketball in a position that we all can be proud of. We are in a conference of the most rich, traditional, and successful basketball programs in the history of college basketball. We are trying to catch up with some schools that have 75 or 80 years of success and tradition ahead of us. So, that number won't catch us up- that's just a number. So, what we have to do is be proud of the progress we're making now and not what happened in the past. That's why I want these guys to focus on and try to lead behind a legacy that the guys that come behind them will be proud of and keep going."

**Florida State and Miami has long been considered one of the most coveted rivalries in sports, how would you describe your team handled the atmosphere today?**

"I can't say enough about the fans support we are getting, the students are so involved, and the community has embraced this team to the point where they are very proud and it's motivating to know that people appreciate what you're doing, and our guys don't take that lightly. I think that during those moments where maybe things might not be going well for you on the court, the fans will inspire you, motivate you, create the enthusiastic environment that I think our guys play off of, hopefully we can keep having enough victory here so the fans will feel like they are a part of this journey that we're on."

**With the Duke game on Monday do you feel like the road schedule you guys had played has kind of prepared you?**

"We have played a lot of tough games on the road. In order to prepare for those road games, you have to come up with an approach that's realistic. What we try to teach our guys is to stay in the moment and let the next practice be one that you demonstrate how much that you want to be successful, and we try not to worry about the road games and the home games, we want them to worry about that which they can control. What I am seeing with this team is that philosophy and focus is causing them to grow and mature and make the progress I think is necessary for us to hopefully at some point reach our full potential, and that's our goal. Our goal is to try to reach our full potential, and the only way you do that is to take it one day at a time and trying to take the approach of which you can control. You can't control next week's game, but we can control how we can prepare. Going to have a good meal tonight, rest, hydrate, get up in the morning go over the films and look at them. Come in tomorrow, focus, and that allows you to kind of make the progress we're making. I'm just hoping that we can continue to keep getting better, at some point then I have to accept whatever happens after that."