



Coaches Quotes

Florida State 80, Boston College 62

Saturday, March 7, 2020

Donald L. Tucker Center

Tallahassee, Florida

FSU Head Coach Leonard Hamilton

Opening Statement:

"I can't tell you how proud I am of our team. The fact that we have created a culture of guys willing to sacrifice minutes of playing time and some of the notoriety that some schools and players get because they play longer, major minutes. We've developed a system that forces our guys to play with a tremendous amount of energy for shorter periods of time. The residual effect of that has been us having opportunities to play for tremendous focus and effort for longer periods during the game. That takes a lot away from what they have been accustomed to as high schoolers and junior college kids coming in, where they all have been the focal point of their teams. So for them to come in and buy into a culture that is different than what they've been accustomed to, I take my hat off to them and they've made the sacrifice gladly. I think that's one of the reasons we've been able to come away with our first ACC Championship. Many times with our culture that we way, everything being instant and automatic and short-lived and everyone wanting instant gratification quickly with the emphasis placed on the one and done and two and out, everybody is concerned about their own individual statistics. These guys have bought into the unselfish spirit that has allowed them to be successful. I'm so proud of them. They are doing well academically, doing well socially, and these teenagers are growing into young adults. For us to win our first ACC Championship with this style, this system, more than anything else with the attitude of these guys makes me very, very proud."

On selflessness of team during this victory:

"They (Trent Forrest, M.J. Walker and Devin Vassell) were major contributors because they fatigue other people. They gave tremendous effort, and that is part of our system. A lot of statistics, a lot of the contributions they make while they are on the floor don't necessarily show up in the statistical column of what makes this bunch of guys unique. Obviously, every year we have a final meeting and each player has an opportunity to address the team and say what this journey has meant to him and they have totally bought into who we are. They really, truly love each other. They've got great relationships. They do a lot of things together. They hold each other accountable. They call each other out. They have a saying that we are "18 strong" and we win by committing. In this day and time, that's unusual and that's why I think they are special."

On winning the ACC Championship and hanging a banner:

"We really, truly feel that because we are in the number one basketball conference ever assembled in the history of college basketball, that we have ... the media has coined a new phrase, these are Blue Bloods. While we were in the Dixie league and the independent, the Metro, all these conferences were formed -- The Big East, ACC. So we've coined our own phrase: we're the New Bloods and we want to tag that on because we're not going to catch up with the 80 years before us and the success that those guys had. So we're fighting for our spot. We're fighting for our position in the hierarchy of the most respected programs

in the history of college basketball. So for us, this is important. It's important for us because we get a notch on our belt. We have to enjoy this but we think we are just getting started. We think that we can get better, we can continue to keep on our upward climb. With our already coined phrase; our own. We aren't ever going to be a "blue blood". We might not be around 70, 80 more years. So the new bloods are here. That's us."

On the post-game celebration:

"I've been so fortunate in my coaching career to have enjoyed this moment another time. It really, I'm somewhat emotional because we want so much, as a staff, for our players to enjoy this moment because now, it motivates you to want to work even harder to enjoy it again, and again, and again. That's what is significant about this moment. It's just the beginning."

On Trent Forest's career at Florida State:

"I keep telling everyone that Trent represents what the Unconquered spirit really means. He's a warrior. He's a Seminole through and through. He represents what the student-athlete is supposed to be about. If you look in the Webster Dictionary and you see student-athlete, his picture is right next to it, with a Seminole on his shirt. He's a good student. He's a good leader, very well respected. He probably could run for mayor, as a right-end candidate in Chipley and win by a landslide. Everyone who knows him and everyone whose been around him, whose come in contact with him recognizes that specialness about him. For years to come, he will make the Seminole nation very proud; whatever he does, wherever he goes. He also sets a standard above where all of our other players will be measured by. Graduated from school, he's in graduate school, academic awards. He's a true Seminole. He's part of the FSU legacy, Amp Lee's cousin, his mother's name is Barbra Lee, so we have a history. In his delivery last night, he was talking about when we first started watching him play. He was in the eight grade. So he didn't have a choice to join up with the Seminole nation. I'm so proud of him. I can't tell you how much he's meant to our program, the winningest player in the history of our program, speaks for itself."

On how long will they celebrate before refocusing on March Madness:

"One of the things about this team, they've have developed an understanding of how to enjoy those moments from a positive standpoint and not even allow, sometimes when you falter, to linger as well. We'll enjoy this for a moment. This is too big, too important for us not to have a celebration but in the conference we are in, we don't have the luxury of not coming back down off the mountain and getting started on refocusing. I think that we've developed those mindsets that we can enjoy for the moment but I really, truly believe that this team feels that we've got some more, good basketball ahead of us."

On seeing the ACC Championship after the first game of the season:

"I have a few media friends, even though you guys probably don't believe that. A few guys that I communicate with, around the country. I told them, I thought our team would be better this year than we were last year. They remind me of that when I see them that I was right. I felt all along that we could be a good basketball team. First game of the year with six new players, we had six guys who didn't really know what to expect. Sometimes a loss cannot be a bad loss. That was a good loss for us because it was hard for us to verbalize the mindset you had to be in to go on the road, first ACC game to go out and deliver, verbally. Our guys got a taste of what it is like when you are not really ready. To their credit, they're going on a European tour, were a little bit more focused, in-sync. They handed our hat to us and showed us where the door was. I thought we regrouped and came home with sixth-ranked University of Florida team at the time. I thought we regrouped and showed what we were capable of doing. The good thing about this team, I still think we've got a lot of room for improvement. We're working hard, we're playing unselfish but we still have a lot of execution issues. I still think we are growing and improving. A lot of injuries this year, we've certainly been able to handle whatever adversity we've had to deal with and found a way to win. I think we've represented very well and a loss like that can help you. I never doubted that we could be where we are."

On Florida State's Player's appreciating what they've done:

"I'm not real sure they do. I'm not real sure they think that way. We are all caught up in the moment and young people, sometimes, don't worry about history. They don't quite get it all the time. I'm sure at some point they will sit back, and look back, and realize they've accomplished a lot and that they've set a path for our program to emulate. I feel that we've made tremendous progress, but because I've been so blessed to have been in this position so many times before, I want what I have experienced to be something consistently, positive happening with our program here. Not that I'm, the other night Corey asked me "Do you enjoy?" I mean I don't know how I'm supposed to act because I just feel that there is some more enjoyment out there that I don't want to miss anything. I want to milk this thing for all I can. You know how you get an orange and want to milk all the juice out of it? Well, I want to still keep milking the juice out of this orange."

On messages from former players and program members:

That's really what it's all about. When those guys are following you all over the world. Those guys are all over the world playing basketball, and following their former school, that says a lot about the culture that is being developed. A lot them, professionally, are doing great things. I'm very proud of those guys. The fact that we've been here enough, this is our 18th year and we've only had three kids not graduate, it is important. Come on in knucklehead, don't say anything bad about me either. Dominik's parents have never seen him play. This is the first time they've had a chance to see him. When you take a kid like Dominik, we tried to recruit him when he left Drake, he stubbed his nose at us. Now he's in the Seminole family. We're very proud of him. He's come right in, he's fit in, he's enjoyed the relationships that motivate him and been a positive influence to all of our guys. Can't say enough of how proud we are of him."

On culture not changing throughout a changing roster:

"We realized the kind of people we need that fits into who we are. We're not for everybody. Most people are challenged by how we play and how our guys play off each other, feed off each other. So we try to be selective, the types of personalities, the characters that we bring in. We try to be honest with people right from the beginning, this is what we expect, this is who we are. I don't try to sugarcoat it. We win by committing. To say that I wouldn't love to have a guy who can come out and give me 30 points every night, shoot 40% from the three, and average 15 rebounds a game, maybe we might look at playing him for a few more minutes. In reality, sometimes that might not necessarily win for you. We think the formula that we use works for us, for who we are. We try to be selective about the type of people we bring into our program because we believe in who we are; we believe in our culture. We think it works for us. There are a lot of guys out there who like being a part of what we are doing. You have some guys, some student-athletes want to be a part of going and doing something that's already done. They guys who are attractive to us, the guys who want to be a part of making a difference, doing something different especially. Carving their own path. We feel very fortunate to have a great staff. I think I've got the best assistant coaches. I think I've got the best staff in the country. Guys who really care about players. Guys who really, really spend quality time with them, talking as much about life as we do basketball. That's why we're connected. We're firm, we hold our guys accountable, but we have more of a family atmosphere that I think really, really festers a togetherness, sacrifice, and unity that I think is necessary for us to come in and play against all these blue bloods when we haven't necessarily been invited to the party. Maybe now they'll invite us to the party."

On not sharing title with another school:

"I would've been happy if we had to share it but obviously its very special when you can hold your finger up and say "we're number one". Back during the year, my players always say I say the same thing over and over and over. I tell them, "I know you all have heard it before." So I treat them like my father treated me. I told them back in September, "nobody's standing on a ladder and saying I'm number four, I'm number five. Only one team has a chance to stand up and say 'I'm number one'". That takes a special effort and a special focus. We truly can say that now. That we're number one. I'm proud of that and happy for my players."

