

## **Forrest Focused On Finishing Career On A High Note**

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Trent Forrest's Senior Day couldn't have gone much better. The former Chipley Tiger played his last game at the Donald L. Tucker Civic Center on March 7 against Boston College.

The Seminoles won 80-62 to clinch the first ACC regular season championship in school history.

It's a remarkable achievement for a Florida State team picked to finish fifth in the ACC before the season, though Forrest said ahead of the Seminoles' opening round game of the ACC tournament against Clemson on Thursday that he has much grander ideas about how he wants to finish his career.

"I want to win the ACC tournament and to win the national championship," he said. "I really feel like I've done basically everything else. We won the ACC regular season, we've won in-season tournaments. The only thing left is to win the ACC tournament and get to the Final Four and win the national championship."

It's hardly a far-fetched notion with FSU ranked No. 4 in the country, though it would've been a tough sell before the season for a group that lost six of its top eight scorers from last year's team.

Forrest has played no small part in the Seminoles' ascendancy, scoring 11.6 points per game - good for second on the team - and leading in assists (4.0) and steals (1.9) while providing all-league defense.

Perhaps even more valuable has been his emergence as team captain and leader as the only returning senior. It's a role that Forrest was expecting before the year and one that he has embraced.

"I definitely wanted it, but it was kind of natural, too, just being the guy that's played the most games and been around the longest," he said. "It's kind of automatic just for the younger guys to come ask you how things work here and how we do things at Florida State."

Forrest's leadership and production helped spur the Seminoles to one of the best regular seasons in program history, but the 6-foot-4 senior said Thursday represents the start of the real season for him.

"I'm ready to start for real, for real," Forrest said. "We've put ourselves in a good position to accomplish what we wanted to in the postseason. It's been very special, just from where we started to where we are now."

"Nobody thought we'd have a chance this year because we lost so many players. Nobody thought we'd be any good. We were able to come out and prove everybody wrong. We're been using that as our motivation the whole season, but I still feel like we've got so much left to accomplish."

This year's NCAA tournament will be the fourth for Forrest, who has nine career games in the Big Dance. Counting the ACC tournament, Forrest is 9-6 in 15 career postseason games.

With all that experience comes a lot of important lessons, with Forrest saying he has learned a lot about what it takes to be successful in March.

"Just the mental toughness and focus you have to have to win," he said. "Basically this weekend is three games back to back to back, and in the NCAA tournament you have to win two games each weekend. It's just the mental toughness and how focused and locked in you have to be in each game to succeed and win."

With the excitement of the postseason comes the realization that the Seminoles are only promised two more games for this season, and for Forrest, the remainder of his college career.

The finish line of a long and distinguished career is in sight for Forrest, who said the fact that he isn't that far off from wearing a Florida State uniform for the last time is starting to set in.

"Yeah, it definitely has," he said. "I look at some of my AAU teammates playing right now and some of them are playing their last games because of losing early in conference championships and their teams not making the tournament.

"I already had my Senior Night, so after this you think about if we lose two games then college is over for me. It definitely has started to sink in."

Forrest said he's trying not to think too much about the past or the future, and is trying harder than ever to stick to the mantra that FSU coach Leonard Hamilton has instilled in him and every other Seminole player.

"I'm really just living in the moment," he said. "That's kind of the approach I take to it. I can't really do anything about the future unless I accomplish what I need to accomplish today.

"That's what coach Ham preaches to us, to take it one day at a time, to do what you have to do to conquer that day and let the chips fall where they may in the future."