

Florida State at Louisville
Men's Basketball | January 18, 2021 KFC Yum! Center
Louisville Coach Chris Mack

(Opening Statement) It is fairly obvious that we got punked from the beginning of the game. Hats off to Florida State. They are a terrific team. They are a team that has a lot of answers at a lot of positions. They play extremely hard. We weren't who we needed to be to start the game. We really weren't for the first 13-15 minutes. I am disappointed. We have a lot of growing up to do in order to match that type of intensity to compete at this level with some of the teams we are playing. We have a lot of work to do.

(About not being ready to play) Yeah, put that on me. You get down by whatever you get down and you are not ready to play. How that is, I have no idea. We fumbled the ball around the basket and missed layups that we had created. We set the tone at such a poor way of playing intimidated. If you get bullied by Florida State early on, that is a problem because you are going to get bullied for 40 minutes. We responded but we got down too deep in a hole.

(The guys said they didn't follow the game plan, is that a byproduct of intimidation?)

"I don't know I mean that's what you are going to get when you play Florida State. You are going to get awkwardness on the offensive end because you have to drive the ball, you have to be able to drive it, you have to be able to get in the lane and draw their help. You have to have the toughness to deliver whether to pass underneath a spray out. You have to be able to play off close outs and we got our shots blocked so early and often to begin the game. That's one of those instances that the guys are talking about. We know they are going to play above the rim. We know they are going to flock, but yet we offer the ball up instead of spraying out or spraying down and shot faking it or drawing fouls or finding teammates. It's not our young guy's fault, it's my fault. We couldn't execute what we wanted to until we were down however many points we were down.

(Is Florida State a particular hard matchup?)

I like to think with the guards that we have, we'd have the ability to get the ball in the lane and I thought we did that. But again, not early and often, we didn't set the right tone. The defense that we played was soft, we gave up way too many easy open jump shots. It doesn't take a whole lot of talent to sprint back to find your man and get matched up to make it a five on five game. Whether we are young, inexperienced or intimidated I don't know but it needs to be corrected.

(About beating you in the same manner last year and UofL coming back winning the next 10 games in a row... were they practicing poorly?)

Yeah good question, two things. Number one: we haven't been practicing poorly, we had a really poor practice before we went to Miami that showed we didn't deserve to win the game. We didn't earn it in practice. Our habits and how we got ready to play, we deserved what we got in Miami. It's a quick turnaround, we get back at 3:15 A.M. That's no excuse, period. But we don't do a whole lot other than watch film and talking it through. We can't wear down guys who have played 36 or 37 minutes and come off a 3:30 A.M. flight. But we didn't execute what we needed to execute. Last year's team is last year's team, they are dead and buried. They unfortunately didn't get the opportunity to play in the NCAA tournament like we all wanted. This year's team has a completely different personality, we have a lot of inexperienced guys that never witnessed high level ACC competition until these last few games, so we better learn from it.

(Is this team harder to coach than last year's team?)

No, they are just younger, they need more reps. They need more understanding that our team is going to win by doing little things and having energy. It's not going to just out-talent people, it's not going to walk out there. We aren't going to have a guy that hangs 30 on somebody. Obviously Carlik and David are very, very high level, our two best guards. But we all have to, including David and Carlik, value the little things that our team needs to do to win. That's my fault because we obviously don't know that yet, but we are going to figure it out.

(About the problem being physical or beyond that)

"Again, I can only go on this year's team, I can't remember last year's game, we certainly watched it in preparation but we got thrown around. There were some things that had nothing to do with physicality. It doesn't take any physicality to sprint back and find out who you are guarding and communicate. You don't do that when you're in high school, you don't do that when you're a freshman on a top 15 team a year ago that doesn't play. You have to do it now and if you don't do it now then Florida State is going to get wide open threes like they did in the first half. Our practices need to be better, we need to develop habits quickly so that our guys can be a lot better on game night.

(In regards to the three-point shooting, a little bit better than the other night, obviously. Probably not where you want it to be, shooting 25 percent, but in regards to the three-point shooting, how much of it is just guys not knocking down open shots? Is it shot selection? What are you seeing when it comes to the three-point shooting?)

"A lot of misses."

(About being ready to play)

"Yeah, we have to figure out as a unit what our team needs to do in order to be successful. We didn't do those things to start the game. Our lack of urgency to begin the game, it's confounding. I know that for a fan you're like 'what the hell is the problem, why aren't we ready to play?'. And that's what our coaching staff is saying and we're going to do everything that we can to fix the damn problem. But when we come out and don't understand how to get in the lane, how to be strong with the basketball, and then get back on the defensive end and get matched up, that doesn't have anything to do with talent, that has everything to do with toughness and it being important to us. And we're going to have to figure that out. And if we don't, then we'll have more nights like tonight."

(How do you begin to challenge your guys to give more effort on those types of plays and search for that identity that your players referenced that is missing right now?)

"Yeah, I think that reality is a great teacher. And the reality of it is we cannot walk out on the floor and out-talent teams. And so, I'd like to think that we have guys that are willing to do what it takes in order to win. And as their coach, I'm telling you that's what we need to do in order to win. And we've got some guys who have to figure that out. We've got to be harder on our guys in practice, we have to demand more, so that when we come out on game night, we don't perform like we did the first 16 minutes."

(You've accepted the blame for the loss. Is some of it because it is a young team, do you feel like you have to go back to the basics and teach them What else needs to be done to get through to them)

"Yeah, that's a big part of it, developing habits. Developing habits that didn't matter when they played at a lower level. For our guys it does not say on their jersey 'Louisville freshman', 'Louisville sophomore that didn't play a year ago', 'Louisville redshirt freshman', 'Louisville grad transfer'. It just says Louisville. Right now, there are a lot of guys that played in this program that did a heck of a lot more to earn those

banners that you see in the Yum! Center, and we're not giving the type of effort that those former players deserve. We have to figure it out, and that includes the coaches and the players.”

(Chris, along that line, How do you look to your leaders, to your vets, guys like Carlik and David to kind of gather the youngsters around and understand what happened? Where do you kind of have expectations for them?)

“It starts in practice. It starts in practice when your best players, I told Carlik this the other day, your best player can't ever have a bad practice. Your head coach can't have a bad practice. Point guards can't have a bad practice. And I don't mean necessarily how you shot the ball, I'm talking about being invested. And so for us, it starts right there. I do think that Dave and Carlik believe it's their team, and I think they've taken some steps, whether it's in huddles, whether it's in practice, to be those types of leaders, but we need more. We need more, and we need more response from our followers. And we need to make the situation and practice harder, so that when they get in the games, we can perform better.”