

RayQuan Evans Thriving During His Senior Season At Florida State

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RayQuan Evans didn't get the recognition he expected as a basketball prospect at Billings Skyview High School in Montana.

After averaging 18.2 points, 6.3 rebounds, 3.3 assists, and 2.1 steals per game, Evans decided to attend North Idaho College, one of the premier junior college basketball programs in the Pacific Northwest.

Evans' star continued to rise at the JUCO level.

And, after averaging 18.2 points, 7.4 rebounds, and 4.9 assists and leading North Idaho to its second consecutive Northwest Athletic Conference championship, Evans decided to attend Florida State University.

So what was it about FSU that sold Evans on the school?

"The culture here," Evans said to the *Democrat*. Braian Angola, who went to North Idaho College, also attended Florida State. He told me all of his experiences and stories and how the school got him prepared for life in general and made him a better person.

"Being in the ACC, I really wanted to compete in this conference, and I felt like Florida State would get me where I wanted to be. Everything about this program is just great."

What also helped Evans feel comfortable at FSU is its dedication to working side by side with the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Evans is half Native-American, and it has played a huge part of his faith as a person and also as a basketball player.

Once he committed to FSU, Evans initially didn't know how much FSU promotes the Native American community. But once he got to campus, Evans said he felt a lot more at ease FSU was the right place for him.

"When I got here, I noticed that they had jerseys dedicated to it and things like that," Evans said. "And I was like wow, they actually take this very seriously."

"My coaches asked me questions about it sometimes about it, and be able to share my experiences with my teammates and my culture is an amazing feeling."

On the court, things couldn't be going better for Evans. After Scottie Barnes suffered an injury that limited him, Evans was inserted in the starting lineup against NC State on Jan. 13, and he delivered in a major way.

Evans, a 6-foot-4 guard, finished with a career-high 24 points in that game as he was 9 of 11 from the floor. He also finished 2 of 2 from three-point range as Evans helped the Seminoles route the Wolfpack 105-73.

Since he became a starter, Evans is averaging 11.6 during FSU's five-game winning streak. Evans is also shooting 47.4% from the three-point line this season.

Coming into the 2020-21 season, Evans wanted to improve all aspects of his game. It has translated into Evans has been playing the best basketball of his career.

FSU associate head coach Stan Jones said Evans is displaying the potential the FSU coaching staff always saw in him.

"Evans is a young man that is incredibly humble, low maintenance almost to a fault, but he also has a quiet complete streak that allows him to play well under difficult circumstances," Jones told the *Democrat*.

"That has allowed him to play. Last year, we averaged more points per possession when Evans was on the floor. We had expectations that Ray would do well this year, and he is starting to show people the type of player he really is."

At the conclusion of December, FSU was 5-2, but the Seminoles lost two of their last three games to UCF and Clemson. And then, FSU was forced to pause for 15 days due to COVID-19 issues within the program.

But once the Seminoles returned to the court, they have looked like a completely different team during FSU's five-game winning streak.

"I think before the COVID break, we weren't as disciplined as we should have been," Evans said. "I think we kind of went through the motions a bit. We thought things were going to play out for us."

"But during that break, we just came together as a team because it was still a long season ahead. The Clemson loss left a bad taste in our mouths. So we were just coming into practice with a different mentality, staying disciplined, and that's what we do in practice."

"Practices have been a lot better, everyone has been focused, everyone has been asking questions, staying disciplined, so when it comes to game time, we just feel prepared."

When Evans isn't practicing or playing basketball, he spends his time reading and playing video games.

Evans and some of his FSU teammates will play Call of Duty: Black Ops Cold War on the Playstation, which was released last year.

"I will play with some of my teammates and my brothers back home," Evans said. "If I'm not doing that, I've been practicing my faith a lot lately, so I try to study the Bible or read as much as possible to get away from social media."