

Coaches Quotes
Florida State 81, Virginia 60
Monday, February 15, 2021
Donald L. Tucker Center
Tallahassee, Fla.

Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton

Opening Statement:

"I'm proud of the overall effort of our team tonight. I thought we played with a tremendous amount of energy on the offensive end and the defensive end. We moved the ball well, made the extra pass, we created offense with our ball movements. We knew that they were a good defensive team. We knew that if we didn't move the ball aggressively and move our bodies with some aggression, they were going to lock us down. I thought that our energy on the defensive end was as good as it has been all year and energy on the offensive end matched our energy on the defensive end. We got a tremendous amount of energy from everybody that went into the game and I thought that allowed for us to play at a very high level for the entire game. I thought the quality of our depth really was a plus for us tonight."

On defense in the first half:

"We were strong fundamentally. We played with a lot of aggressiveness tonight. I think sometimes we have the tendency to move at the pace that the offense is playing. Tonight though, I think that we played with a lot of energy, we got to our spots, and made them work for the shots they got. We played great defense, but they also shot 43 percent from the floor, that's not bad and 45 percent from three. We didn't shut them down we just made them work for every shot that they got."

On limiting Virginia's 3-point shots:

"You don't have the luxury of choosing what you're going to try and stop when you're playing this Virginia team. They are a tremendous three-point shooting team, they shot 45 percent from the three tonight. They shot 50 percent from the field, 45 percent from the three and 80 percent from the free-throw line, they are one of the top, if not the top team in America in those areas. This is a complete team; we didn't have the luxury of over-emphasizing post touches or perimeter shots. We had to defend their entire system. We have the up-most respect for Virginia and their outstanding coach, he's one of the best in the country. Look what they have done in the ACC over the last five years, they've won more games than anybody. I thought that us realizing we've stubbed our toe a couple times, reminded us that we needed to be at our very best. My concern at this point is how do we maintain that same level of focus every game. You guys have seen us through a five-game stretch where I thought we were on point; they played a little bit harder than us. We have to find the mindset so that we don't have to be playing on a big Monday, against the number one team in the league, a team that has dominated the ACC over the last 5 years to play at our very best. We have to find a way to come out and play with this level of focus every night and we had a couple game stretch where I thought we did that. Our challenge now is seeing how close we can come to maintaining this. I think we're capable of it from how we played tonight. I think this team has potential we haven't tapped into yet."

On Sadaar Calhoun's 3-Point Shot:

"I think that I put three guys in there that came off the bench with a tremendous amount of energy. Defensively we got a couple stops, we got a few deflections, we pushed the ball down the floor, got some good looks and fortunately we were able to knock them down. I think that energy that the guys came in with gave us a boost, allowing us to extend the lead. I thought that Virginia fought very hard to get it back to a 7-point game and then we brought out some guys that were fresh and they turned it up a notch and made the difference in the game."

On Balsa Koprivica coming back:

"He hasn't practiced in two days. He got hurt the morning of the Wake Forest game, but it just shows that our trainer Amanda Robinson did an amazing job getting him ready. I thought that he was eager to play and played well. He made a big block there in the second half and he sent a message. He was confident that he wanted to contribute."

Just to have him, with his hands and presence around the basket is a part of who we are. Glad to see him back now, he'll have a couple days off and hopefully we'll be playing someone on Saturday."

On Balsa Koprivica hitting the outside shots:

"We have periods in practice where all our big guys shoot jump shots, knowing that that's part of the overall development of our team. He's been shooting the ball very well and they backed off of him and weren't expecting him to do that. We had a couple of things we had hoped to do, one offensive system where we step our big guys out to the corners and away from the basket hoping they can knock those shots down. He's been shooting jump shots since the beginning of practice; we just haven't utilized it in games yet."

On having tall ball-handlers (Scottie Barnes and RaiQuan Gray):

"There is no doubt that having two guys like that who can dribble and pass the ball like that takes away a lot of pressure when you have that many ball handlers on the floor. Someone asked me about our recruiting scheme, that's why we bring in guys that can fit the way we want to play. That just gives us four or five guys on the floor that can all handle the ball. It eliminates the opportunities for us to turn the ball over, that's why we only had five turnovers tonight. Virginia is an outstanding ½ court defensive team but tonight they did give us some full court pressure and I thought our guys handled that very well. One thing that the respect we had for Virginia and the outstanding job their coach has done, have set the standard that now everyone in the ACC is being judged by. It was important that we played well against them, to give us a good chance to win and give our kids the confidence that we might not be exactly where those kids are but at least we're in the conversation."

On the John Thompson Towel:

"On a national basis, all the coaches around the country decided to show our respect for Big John. He played a big role in my life; he was a mentor of mine. I leaned on him anytime I was in a situation where I needed his years of experience. He kept me from probably making some mistakes by letting me benefit from the wisdom he had gained from his years of experience. I wear this with a lot of pride. He was instrumental in me getting the Oklahoma State job, and he alone was probably the reason I took the Miami job. Those guys have meant so much to me and no one is more appreciative of the legacy he left and for the mentorship he gave than Leonard Hamilton, I'll tell you that."