

Coaches Quotes

Florida State 92, Wake Forest 82 (OT)

Saturday, February 13, 2021

Donald L. Tucker Center, Tallahassee, Fla.

Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton

Opening Statement

“Balsa (Koprivica) didn’t play because he turned his ankle this morning in shoot around. It was one of those freak things where he just stepped the wrong way, non-contact, and sometimes when that happens, this late in the game, you have problems. Malik (Osborne), he got two fouls early in the game and then his backup Tanor (Ngom) had two fouls, so it really tested the strength of our bench and our rotation. We really had to be creative and make some adjustments that we haven’t had to make. This was an excellent game for us because Wake Forest came out with a new system that they had not been consistently executing throughout the course of the season. They were really patient, moved the ball, got some back-door cuts on us and challenged all our defensive principles. We got a little separation in the beginning of the second half, we were up by 14, but then they just went crazy knocking down threes. They’ve had several games where they’ve hit a lot of threes, they have several guys who have had seven or eight threes in a game. We knew that they were a really good shooting team, and they did not disappoint from that standpoint. I’m very proud of our guys, they got the stops we needed to get, got the deflections and steals, made some big plays, hit our free throws down the stretch and that was good for us. Hopefully our guys will utilize the intensity of this game to help us prepare for the game on Monday night.”

On Scottie Barnes getting the ball on the last play

“Some coaches like to call a timeout and give the other team a chance to set their defense. We just felt like if he missed it, we wanted to go and push the ball. If someone didn’t stop us, we were going in for the layup and if someone did stop us, we were going to kick it out for the three. You don’t have a whole lot of time to make too many decisions, especially when there’s only five seconds to go. Scottie is really quick and fast with the ball and he finishes with those long arms and we’re very fortunate that we were able to put it into overtime.”

On the way RaiQuan Gray played

“He was battling inside; he got some tough rebounds especially since we didn’t have Balsa (Koprivica) and the other 7-footers were on the bench in foul trouble. He was our big guy. He stepped up tonight, he gave us a major contribution tonight with 12 rebounds, 24 points, and going 10-10 from the free throw line. He and MJ are probably two of our more experienced players and we needed their exceptional leadership this afternoon.”

On having veterans adjusted to the ‘pause in play’

“In the game of this nature we had to go with our most experienced players. We were down three players; one was injured and the other two were in foul trouble. We were playing against a team that really is used to this; this is typical for what Wake Forest has been doing all year. The defeats that they have had, they always end up in every game. We knew that they would be tough. I’m a little disappointed that we were not able to maintain our lead in the second half. Hopefully we can learn and grow from the mistakes that were made, but the attitude of those guys who have been around awhile was huge for us today.”

On having 11 straight overtime wins

“I think that we have an unbelievable coaching staff, specifically assistant coaches. Stan Jones has been with me for 25 years, Mike Bradley (weight training coach) has been with us 20 years, CY (Charlton Young) has been with us since high school, Steve (Smith) is very experienced. We spend a lot of time on situations and I think our guys have a level of confidence when we get in those situations. They don’t seem to panic. We’ve been going over a lot of these situations since day one of practice, we have been fortunate enough to maintain our poise. We make our free throws and good decisions down the stretch in these situations.”

On Saturday-Monday game situation

“Our practice (on Sunday) won’t be very physical; it will be much more a mental practice. Working on communicating and walking through our game plan. Virginia is probably one of the best teams in America in terms of execution, offensively and defensively. We have to be aware of what they’re doing, we won’t have the luxury of going out there and drilling it so we’re going to have to rely on it being mental. We’re going to be walking through it and trying to retain our game plan. They are exceptional offensively; they don’t do much but what they do, they do it over and over again. They do what they do and if you can stop it, you can win and if you can’t stop them, they are going to score. You have to execute against their style of defense; they’re going to trap you when the ball goes into the post, they’re going to play the line, they’re going to come out of their positions very well, so you have to hit shots and execute. On the defensive end you have to be on your horse all the time.”

On how prepared some of the players are, since having played them before

“They (Wake Forest) changed a little bit. Even though we have played them before, I think it helps that we have a tremendous amount of respect for them. They’re doing some things differently; they’re emphasizing some things differently. They are a lot more aggressive, they’re averaging a lot more points, they’re pace has increased a lot. They are a different kind of offensive team; they have weapons in all five spots. They have a quality of depth that is different from the past, they’re playing more people. We’re going to enjoy this victory for a little bit. We know that Virginia is going to be a challenging opponent for us, but that’s life in the ACC.”

On what Anthony Polite means to the team

“There’s no doubt that his experience means a lot. He is probably our best on the ball defender, and now he’s extremely confident in his jump shooting ability. He makes good decisions, he has a strong physical presence on the court, a great teammate, great in the huddle, and knowledgeable about our system. He is always speaking to more experienced players and he’s always on point with our game plan. His basketball IQ is great, he’s a pure Seminole through his heart and I’ve enjoyed coaching him. We’re a lot better when he’s healthy.”

On Balsa Koprivica’s return

“I have no way of knowing. He turned it this morning and he couldn’t play today. He’s getting treatment for it and we’ll have to see where he is on Monday.”