

Coaches Quotes

Florida State 81, Virginia 60

Monday, February 15, 2021

Donald L. Tucker Center

Tallahassee, Fla.

Virginia Head Coach Tony Bennett

Opening Statement:

“You always point to the offense as the key, but our defense really stepped up. We got back, we didn’t let them in the lane, we guarded the ball, and we were inspired. If you want a chance to beat a team of this caliber or that is playing at this level in this atmosphere, you can’t be a sometimes really good defensively. You have to be an all the time good in the areas that you have control over. You can’t control if they can hit the big shot or make an acrobatic play. We can control if our defense is set, if we’re active on the ball, if we’re in position, and not committing lapse of judgment. That was the part that we have to look into and say how good are we and how good do we want to be. That’s the disappointment for me because we were there for a while and then all of a sudden it went away that quickly. Like I said, you can’t win a game in the first five or eight minutes, but you can put yourself in a position where you can make it near impossible for another team to come back. To put ourselves in that hole was frustrating but hats off to Florida State, they’re that good.”

On losses to ranked teams

“They’re physical, aggressive teams and they’re good, that’s why their ranked. Its figuring out how to battle it out and stay in there and be tough minded. I think goes back to the things you have control over, we’re not the most physically imposing team but we have to do physically imposing things that matter. In those games, like Gonzaga and Florida State, it’s there right away and you have to fight it. You have to learn from it and grow from it. I did like how we did battle back but every time we made a break down, they banged a three or scored. (Scottie) Barnes is for real, how quickly he gets to the lane and we didn’t help ourselves which was frustrating. (RaiQuan) Gray was also really good tonight.”

On learning from other ranked losses:

“You’re always trying to learn from those, be thankful for what adversity teaches you and are you wise enough and thankful enough to apply it. So here we are, and in every situation, it refocuses you and in ways that you need it. We’ve been playing some good basketball, but it wasn’t tonight, partly because of Florida State and partly due to us. I think that was our third or fourth game in a short amount of time, so we’ll take a day off and recharge, hopefully comeback with guns blazing and your tenacity and focus. We’re coming down to the end and you don’t want to leave anything on the table and that’s what we have to do moving forward.”

On Florida State’s defense:

“Florida State is unlike a lot of teams you’ll play. They make every catch hard, they switch every single screen, ball screen, off ball screen, they force you to spread the court, touch the paint and get a little bit aggressive to make the next pass. Again, we’re not that physically imposing so we weren’t on the glass and that was harder because we were so spread out. It challenges you to handle the ball and they bring in waves of guys. I thought that that was tough, and their athleticism and their size is real. They kind of switch positions and that’s why we brought in some guys that really get the ball into the paint and then play out of that, in years past that’s what we’ve always had to resort to.”