

Coaches Quotes

Notre Dame 83, Florida State 73

March 6 2021

Purcell Pavilion, Notre Dame, Ind.

Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton

Opening Statement:

"I have to give Notre Dame a lot of credit. They played the kind of basketball today that has given us some problems throughout the year. They spread the floor, they took their big guys away from the basket, and we know they're one of the better 3-point shooting teams. When you rely on perimeter shooting as much as we do, and your shots aren't falling you have to make adjustments. Today, early on, I thought we had some wide open, uncontested shots that we just couldn't get to fall today. They seem to be moving the ball on the other end and they were able to get them to fall. They did a really good job executing. I thought that they made the extra pass, and they attacked the basket when they did drive, very aggressively. I was proud of the guys because we were down by 20, cut the lead a little bit before half, and then we came out in the second half and cut it to ten and then got it to four and then we had those two turnovers late. The bottom line is that I think Notre Dame did a better job at playing to their strengths and they exploited our weaknesses by not turning the ball over, being extremely aggressive, hitting their open shots and by challenging our defensive discipline by making the extra pass. At the end they made their free throws and when they got some of those open looks, that we had in the first half, theirs went down and we missed ours. You have to give them credit, they were a lot sharper on their game plan than we were today."

On the technical foul to the bench:

"To be very honest with you, I don't know what happened with the technical foul. I don't know why he gave it to us. It seems like one of those days where the officials, I thought, were a little more sensitive than what I have noticed in the past. A lot of times, when there's an issue they're concerned about, they'll mention it to you. Today was one of those days where they didn't. Today's game meant a lot and there's no doubt that our team, our kids, and maybe even some of our coaches were a little mouthy but no one disrespected anybody. There was nothing said that I felt was disrespectful, unless you wanted to be overly sensitive. The game is over though, we're not going to get it back and me complaining about the officials is not going to do any good. The technical, we either deserved it or not, but we got it so if that something to do with the game then it did. I like to think it was the 20 points that we gave up in the first half that had more to do with us losing the game than that technical in the second half."

On going with a smaller line-up in the second half:

"We didn't have much choice. We've done that plenty of times but when you're down that much, you have to make the adjustments that you can in relation to what the other team is doing. I thought that they were doing a good job with the smaller line up. Their big line-up was more of a perimeter shooting team. They caused us to spread the floor and to be able to match the success they were having, we had to go small to match their quickness. They had an ability to penetrate and then kick it out for those threes, but I thought we did a much better job for a period of time with that line-up. We just didn't do well enough and you have to give Notre Dame a lot of credit because this was a big game for us and part of the journey with our team is being in the position mentally and emotionally to handle this moment. There's pressure to want to play well and win the championship and the will of Notre Dame to want to be successful against a Top-25 opponent was a little stronger than ours today. Emotionally, I thought that we were ready but sometimes you have to learn how to handle these situations when they arise and hopefully, we'll learn from this and be stronger for the remainder of the year."

On plans for going to Greensboro:

"We are coming back home tonight, hopefully when we land, we have a Christmas present in March. We're going to come home, regroup and probably won't go to Greensboro until sometime later this week."

On M.J. Walker's performance today:

"I just think that he has had a great year for us, and this is just part of being a human being. Sometimes you just don't play as well as you want to play. I don't think it was an M.J. off day; I think it was a Florida State Seminole off

day. We didn't play well enough to win the game and we've won games without him scoring points before. You win games by committing and we lost the game because we didn't play well. I don't think MJ's numbers or stats indicate how well he did play. He gave us great leadership and he gave us tremendous effort as he always does."

On getting comfortable playing outside of Tallahassee:

"We're going to be in the same position as everyone else. Everybody is going to be 'on the road' in the ACC Tournament. If I go back and look at the records of everyone else, it's just the way that it goes sometimes. Sometimes it's more challenging to win on the road, but I think we're a pretty good basketball team and I think we just have to figure out how to play well. I don't think it's whether or not we're on the road, the court is still 94x50 and the goals are still 10 feet. No one runs out of the stands to block a shot or get a steal, we just got beat by a team that played better than us today. I'm not really sure that it had anything to do where the game was played at. I think they just played an excellent basketball game today in relation to who they are and the talent they have. You have to give them credit instead of trying to dissect what happened to us today. We just got beat by a team who played better than us today. We proved we're a good shooting team, we didn't shoot well today. We proved we're a good defensive team, we didn't defend very well today. We didn't draw the number of fouls that we normally do because we weren't going strong to the basket. You have those days and sometimes it's not about what you didn't do. You have to give a team credit when they play well, and I thought today they outplayed us today."

On momentum going into the postseason:

"To be honest with you, I have never been a believer in momentum. That's a philosophical media term that's used. As a coach, when you lose a game, you have to turn around and get ready for another. Sometimes it's other people who have an effect on how you play and today Notre Dame played to who they are. Hopefully, from our standpoint, normally we bounce back from a loss. I've always thought we respond pretty well after a loss."