

Player Quotes
Florida State 65, Miami 64
Tuesday, January 11, 2022
Donald L. Tucker Center
Tallahassee, Fla.

Florida State Redshirt Senior RayQuan Evans

With everything that been going on, with you personally and on the court, what was that moment like for you at the end of the game there?

“That moment was huge. We have been dealing with a lot of adversity, both team wise and in my personal life, but just to be able to be in the moment and be there with my brothers and to continue to grow and represent Florida State ... it was just a big team win. I’m glad we got that team win because it’s something we can build off, especially going into the Syracuse game, but it’s just a moment you will never forget. I thank my teammates for that, I thank the fans, I thank the coaching staff, and everybody involved in this. It was just a very special moment.”

I’m sure the game winning free throw situation is something you can do in practice but can’t replicate the pressure that comes with it. How do you stay level-headed in that moment?

“Believe it or not, I like to meditate. I learned some things from meditation -- just to take a couple deep breaths, be in the moment. So I try to incorporate that. I’ve shot thousands of free throws, so I just sat there, did my routine, and trusted my work, and I hit two big free throws. That came from the confidence of my team as well.”

This is big-time rivalry in basketball and in football and people remember this. You cemented your part in the history of this rivalry. Just talk about what it means to you personally.

“It is a great feeling. It shows the competitive spirit that this team has. We have been in multiple situations where we could have folded in a situation like that. We’ve shown that earlier in the year, but this is a moment where we came together, we bonded, a lot tighter including the coaches, including the staff, and all the team. This is probably a moment that I’ll never forget just because we fought, we fought some adversity, but we came out with a win.”

Coming into this week, you guys were struggling a bit, coming off of COVID, and you’re facing the two teams at the top of the league. What was the mindset coming into this week and how big do you think this week will be for the younger guys?

“This week is huge. It’s a lot of a learning experience. Some of us older guys, who have been here before, we’ve been in multiple situations like this in the previous years, so to be able to keep the young guys along and show them that any given night you can be beaten by any team, it doesn’t matter if you are home or away. I think it’s a great learning experience, it’s something we can definitely build off of going into the rest of the season because we have ultimate goals where we want to win the regular season and things like that. So, just continue building each day and on each win.”

You guys have won so many games under this building and when you were here a few weeks ago, you took a loss. How much of a motivating factor was that to get the streak going back again?

“It was huge. When you take losses, you obviously want to learn and this is a special facility because there haven’t been many losses in this facility, so again, for us older guys to teach the younger guys the culture here. You never want to lose at home and that’s something that the coaches really pride Florida State on so being able to learn from those losses so we can prevent that. Miami is a tough team; they are a great team and they fought until the end. I’m very proud of our new guys, Matthew Cleveland stepped up, John Butler stepped up, all those guys, they are learning and growing game by game.

Florida State Redshirt Senior Malik Osborne

You knocked down a historic three-pointer, talk about that shot amongst other and again, it's a great victory in a rivalry.

"I knew there was a lot riding on that shot, but I knew as a veteran, as an experienced guy, I've been there before. I've had my moments where I've been successful and haven't been successful, so to me I didn't really think about it, you just get lost in the moment and keep playing basketball. You don't think about the time, you know there's enough time on the clock, you just go out there and do what I normally do, and that's hit shots. Luckily, Ray (Evans) was able to penetrate, draw the defense in as he does so well, and then kick it out to me, and I was just able to do the easy part and knock down the shot. So, didn't put too much thought into it, it was kind of routine as an older guy, but definitely glad to have that go down and help us win."

How difficult has the last couple of weeks been, dealing with the injury and not getting a lot of practice time?

"It's been tough, trying to play through the injury, the sprained ankle, but I'd rather put my body on the line for this team because I know that they work hard, they depend on me, and I'd rather give them whatever percentage I have of me, as opposed to leaving them just to fend for themselves. As a leader, I know that I can be vocal, but I would rather help show them the way and then at least guide them to a point where they can takeover and step into a leadership role of their own, as far as the young guys and even some of the older guys as well."

How impressed have you been with how those younger guys are starting to develop? Coach Hamilton was talking about the way they have been reacting quicker, they're not thinking as much, how impressed have you been, especially this week?

"I've been very impressed. Very impressed and very proud of these young guys and how they just embraced the role and embraced the coaching and finally really starting to buy in. I've been telling a ton of people this, in the beginning of the year, when we had our bumps and bruises, we are going to be fine. Later in the season, we are going to be one of those teams, like two years ago, where we play, and we get better through experience. Right now, that's all we really lack is experience. We don't lack physical talent, we don't lack skill, it's just experience. We are in a league right now where two years ago there were young teams, now there are older teams, so now that these guys are getting experience, we are able to pull it altogether. I've been very impressed with Matthew Cleveland, John Butler came through and hit some big shots, Naheem (McLeod) has come through and just provided such a spark off the bench. We've been telling these guys for a long time that they are going to be the difference between us winning and losing. They finally bought into that, they finally stopped thinking too much, and just put it off to instinct because they are all great basketball players with high IQ, and we just want them to go off of their natural instinct. They've been doing that recently and I couldn't be more impressed or proud of these guys."

Coach Hamilton said that Miami could be a Final Four team. How hard were they to prepare for and to get a win against?

"I agree with that. Miami is a very tough team. They are a team that has went through their lows the past couple of years and now they got the younger guys who have become more mature, and they are starting to figure it out. They got a couple transfers, a couple older guys, and now they gained experience that they lacked before. It's hard to scout against them because they are such a sole team but when they start moving the ball too, it makes it even more a problem because they are all individually incredibly talented as you can see from today. Charlie Moore, (Kameron) McGusty, Miller, these guys are ballers, they are hoopers, they come through and they make big plays for their team, so that's what makes them hard to guard. You can look at a scout report, but then they can pull something else out that you've never seen and be successful at doing it at a high clip, so very big props to Miami, they are a great team, they deserve all the respect that they are getting, but I agree with Coach Hamilton, they are a final four team, I'm just glad that we were able to come through, step up, get lost in the moment, and get this win."

When RayQuan Evans gets fouled with less than a second left, are you guys talking to him in that moment or just letting him be in his own world before he goes up to the line?

"At first, we were talking to him, but then me knowing Ray for about two-three years now, I told everybody that he's fine, he's an experienced veteran, he's been here before, he's made shots like this before, he's made free throws, let him do his thing. Ray, being the type of player he is, coming through with straight confidence, man just said game"

time. I looked at him, he said 'game time.' I said, 'enough said.' I don't have to tell you anything more, you know how big this moment is, you know how big these free throws are, you come through with that type of confidence, I'll live and die with the result. Obviously, we'll live with the result, and we are very happy with the result, so that is just what I expect out of our veteran guys, out of our leaders and I'm equally as impressed with our young guys as I am with Ray."

Malik, why is this rivalry so important for people who don't understand it?

"It's important because Miami is one of those teams, we take pride in Florida State trying to run the state, we've been winning against teams in the state, so this is just a really big game. These guys came off a big win from Duke, so you know that they are getting a lot of more pub, a lot of more credit, as they deserve, but you know for us we've always had this "run the state" mentality. So, for people on the outside looking in, it's more of a pride thing. It's Florida State pride, its Seminoles pride, we just had to get it done. This team is a really good team and they have been tired of losing to us year after year, so they gave us their best shot and we gave them our best shot, and at that point we were just living with the result, so really big rivalry, but we will see them again."