

Coaches Quotes

Florida State 79, Louisville 70

Saturday, January 8, 2022

Donald L. Tucker Center

Tallahassee, Florida

Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton

Opening Statement

"We had a lot of guys contributing tonight. Malik (Osborne) hasn't practiced since before the Wake Forest because he turned an ankle and he's been out, however many days that is, and he didn't practice at all this week. His numbers are not necessarily impressive, but his effort and his leadership, made a big difference in the game. Him going out, in the first half, he got winded quickly because he has not even run up or down the floor. He had a boot on yesterday and he came out today and gave us tremendous effort. Obviously, Caleb Mills, put us back in the first half. Then I look down at the stat sheet and I saw the guys that came off the bench, each one of them contributed. I told the guys in the locker room that I thought they found out that magic level that you have to have to compete with the better teams in the league and I thought we took a step in the right direction tonight."

Do you think Caleb Mills was responding to the way he shot the other night, feeling like he needed to step up, or do you think it just came to him naturally?

"No, this is just naturally the way he plays. He's been trying to blend in, he's trying to play unselfish, and he's trying to give us good leadership. I thought tonight he sensed that some of the guys were struggling a little bit. He said that he was going to go out and give us good leadership, offensively and defensively. He scored 27 points, but I thought his defense was excellent, his energy was excellent, and he fatigued himself several times, asked to come out of the game. He had the right mental frame of mind and I thought he gave us great leadership and inspired the rest of our players."

What can you say about Matthew Cleveland's growth?

"Matthew's baskets, his contribution, was outstanding. A lot because there were energy baskets, driving to the basket, getting big rebounds, tip-ins, getting paint touches. His points were very valuable because they were energy points that really really came at an outstanding time."

Anthony Polite didn't shoot fairly well tonight, but his leadership and rebounding really helped the team, how important is it for these guys to know their role and step up against each team?

"Let's talk about role. We have been a team that share the ball and share playing time. We work hard at creating for each other. But right now, we are still trying to adjust to our system, offensively and defensively. So, you have a lot of apprehensiveness, you have a lot of guys not real sure of where they should be, how fast they should go to get in those spots. So that's what happens when you have six or seven first-year guys trying to blend in with each other. We still have a ways to go. Tonight, our energy was good, we overcame, but what we are trying to accomplish with our spirit, our energy, that Seminole mindset that we have been known for and I thought it made a huge difference tonight. We weren't perfect, we still have a ways to go, but I thought tonight we were able to create that type of mentality that I think it takes for us to compete consistently. The challenge for us now though is to maintain that mental frame of mind. That's almost like going to the weight room when you are lifting weights, you're getting stronger, well you got to keep practicing that mental frame of mind so you can keep getting stronger and that spirit allows you to be consistent with that every night."

Coach, tonight FSU had more assists, 14 to 11, FSU had more steals, 5-3, and the Seminoles had less turnovers, 6-10, can you describe the effort, the hustle, the determination to win the game?

"There is no doubt that we had to be our very best in order to be successful tonight as Louisville is very very good and they have a tremendous legacy, a tremendous tradition that really generates that mindset that you know you have to be at your very best in order to be successful and obviously we feel that we still sputtered a little bit and that we definitely need to show some signs of improvement so I think that the respect that we have for Louisville

and their program and what they stand for in college basketball I thought really motivated us and it kind of helped us get that mindset that it takes to be consistent in that end.”

Caleb Mills really knocked down some shots, can you just talk about his contribution?

“I think Caleb is just showing you a little of what he is capable of doing. He is an all-around player, he makes good decisions with the ball, his defense is solid, he is now becoming more and more vocal in terms of leadership, and I think he is growing into our program right in front of you. His all-around game is complete, and I think he is going to continue showing what he is capable of doing as we move through the rest of the season.”

It seemed like that was the second half at the free throw line for you all; I don't know if you would win without that close at the free throw line.

“It's interesting, and I'm saying this to you guys, I think we are a good free-throw shooting team and I think we are a good three-point shooting team. We just got to show you guys. Most of the free throws that we are missing, it just shows that we need to grow, we need to mature, be calm, be relaxed, be able to step into the foul line, and have enough experience to know that it's supposed to go into the basket. That's a sign that when you are very inexperienced, sometimes your mind just won't let you feel confident, and hopefully as we continue to keep moving forward through the remainder of the season, that our guys will get into a more relaxed, confident frame of mind when they step up to that free throw line because we did miss several free throws tonight that I thought could've made a difference in a tight game..”

Guard Caleb Mills

Did you feel that the way you guys struggled offensively last time out, did you feel like you needed to get you guys going in the first half, be a little more assertive offensively?

“Definitely. I talked with my coaches, my teammates, they were telling me those specific things, but at the end of the day it wasn't necessarily. I was just coming out to fight, with a good team coming into our home, we got to protect our home court. I was just lost in the fight.”

Coach Hamilton said you may have identified in the first half that he needed someone to step up and be that offensive leader that you were with 23 points, was that something that you picked up on?

“Not necessarily. I was just taking shots that I thought I could make. Once again, just getting lost in the fight, I wasn't worried about too early of a shot. I was just out there, if I felt like I needed to shoot it, I would shoot it and I felt like if I needed to pass, I would pass and get to the line. Just going back to saying I was lost in the fight. I was just trying to win.”

Talk about knocking off Louisville at home early in the ACC season.

“You've got to take care of at home court and at least split on the road, so we've got to take care of our home court regardless of who it was, whether it was Louisville, Duke, Carolina, or whoever. We just have to make up for that (the loss to Syracuse) and it's all just uphill from there.”

I feel like this time of year you see some freshmen hit a wall, some freshmen come into their own, what has it been like seeing Matthew Cleveland and the strides he's made of late?

“I'm proud of his (Matthew Cleveland's) fight today, his focus. I don't remember him making any, if at all, mistakes defensively today. John Butler was in there fighting for rebounds. Jalen (Warley) really hit some shots, took care of the ball, and that's all you ask for out of those three. With Matt hitting the free throws, the big free throws, big shot he hit, that's just the cherry on top.”

How big do you think this game will be offensively and defensively looking at the team because you guys are 8-5 on the season, you have a really tough schedule ahead with two UM games and one Duke game so how big do you think this game will be?

“With Miami up next, this will be a huge one for us. I'm ready to fight, Tuesday, I'm ready to fight, Tuesday.”

Was the team's confidence shaken at all in some of these tougher performances and do you feel like a game like this can kind of restore that?

“With a young team, people's first-year in college, or going through specific games on the court not playing well the game before or tough game, stretch of games you didn't play well, it can mess with a lot of the young people, make them question their last game, whether, its millions of questions, I'm sure you can understand, but I'm sure this game will let their confidence come back, including all of the older people, anybody that needs confidence. As long as we don't get too high on this win, enjoy it for the night, and we 0-0 on Tuesday.”