

Coaches Quotes

Florida State 61, Georgia Tech 75

Wednesday, January 26, 2022

McCamish Pavilion

Atlanta, Ga.

Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton

Opening Statement

"I have to give Georgia Tech a lot of credit. Their defensive zone schemes seemed to give us an awful lot of trouble. It's hard to turn the ball over against a zone defense, and we did not find a way to do that tonight. I think that was our Achilles heel in the first half. In the second half, we went smaller and contained the dribble better. We were able to get some stops and get out in transition. Once we got into the half court, we didn't drive the ball very well and we were tentative, unlike the way we have been. That is still part of the development that we are doing. We went through seven different types of schemes. We seemed to be very passive tonight and not nearly as aggressive as I hoped to be. There were periods there where Georgia Tech shot the ball very well. It seems as though when we did cut it, but we got a little momentum and hit some big shots. You have to give them credit. They out played us tonight. This is a loss that will not look very good on our resume, which means that we have to figure out a way to make up for this and hopefully get another run of games being successful."

Are you concerned with this team's ability to play against zone?

"Not very many people in our league play zone, but we have not done very well against zone the entire year. It's interesting that we have been an excellent team against zones in the past. I think our schemes are pretty good. We have guys that will learn how to position themselves in this environment. There are simple things that I want to be technical. I thought everything we wanted was available, but we did not execute and take advantage of it. We are still learning how to attack zone. We have been very ineffective against zones all year long. I like playing against zones, but this year we have been tentative, and that is something we have to correct. I don't know that we could have been more prepared; they didn't do anything that we weren't prepared for and didn't work on or have in our game plan. We just did not go out and execute."

Is Caleb Mills fighting something?

"A throat infection."

What does that do to your rotation?

Caleb (Mills) is a little more confident and certain. I like our schemes and thought we were prepared. But this zone made our guys extremely tentative. Caleb is a big part; he is someone who makes big shots and gets everyone else going. I want to give our guys credit. It's not as much about what we didn't do, but that they had a great game plan. If you look at the games they have lost, they are near victories. Even with a three- or four-point loss with some larger margin loses, they have been there just about every game. Even though they are last in our league, they are better than you think. The league is taking on a different projecting image. On any given night, if you are not ready to play at your very best, you can lose a game like we did. We now have to prepare ourselves for Virginia Tech. They are going to be hungry for a victory, too. That is the nature of this league. You cannot have minutes and periods where you do not execute. You have to play hard and execute."

Is there one common thing that added up tonight?

"It was a combination of everything. You can't flash into the middle of the zone or walk in there, you have to cut in and out to the base line, to the key, to the wing. You have to be extremely versatile. They played their wings high. We had plenty of opportunities to get lobs, but we were not very aggressive. You're not going to get all the way to the basket playing against a zone like this. But you can get to the lane and find your teammates. We asked our players what they thought the issue was, and think that the guy in the middle of the lane created problems for us. We watched a lot of film and knew exactly where they were going to be. But that is the learning process. I was concerned that our team would be dominated by first year guys and not nearly as many veterans as we normally

have. We have our moments where we show that we are vulnerable and that we are still learning to do things correctly. This was another one of those moments.”

Did you like what you saw defensively in the second half?

“Having Malik (Osborne) on the floor where we didn’t have so much help in recovery and containing the dribble while they weren’t finding as many holes to get in and get the kick out made a big difference. We have been a team that has utilized our big guys. I thought Naheem played one of his better games tonight and showed his potential. But they are a team that isolates you. Containing the dribble and spreading the floor against that system is not one that we utilize. But that is what they do best. They have two or three guys that, unless you protect the rim, will be able to do what they did tonight. We will bounce back, we always do.”

How good is it to see Anthony Polite knocking down all his open shots?

“It’s about who was getting the ball to him. The inconsistency of our movement kept them from getting the looks that he could make. We’ve had a lot of close wins, but that is kind of who we are. We are a team that is still growing and developing. I like being older, and right now, we are not very old.”