

Coaches Quotes

Florida State 61, Georgia Tech 75

Wednesday, January 26, 2022

McCamish Pavilion

Atlanta, Ga.

Georgia Tech Head Coach Josh Pastner

Opening Statement

"First off, I want to give tremendous credit to Florida State. Everybody knows how I feel about Coach Hamilton. You know, it's well overdue that he deserves to be in the basketball hall of fame. I don't know if you know this stat, he's won 55 games. He has won 55 games, when his team is not ranked against ranked opponents, he leads the history of college basketball, beating ranked opponents when his team is not ranked so and plus, he's got so many wins when he's ranked beating ranked teams. So that just shows you he's an incredible coach. I'm a huge fan. And their programs just, you know, an awesome program. So, want to give a great shout out to Florida State. Secondly, want to give a tremendous shout out to IO to IO Taylor Dixon and his group, Steve Robertson for the marketing department. You know, I thought we had a great energy in the crowd with the students. And that was big, and it was you know, they've done such a great job, you know, IO and his team. And Danielle and Steve. Obviously, Steve works with directly Danielle's reports right to IO, but the students had been so good for us to share. We haven't been able to get them a win, you know, in that in that environment. And tonight, I was so happy that we're able to come through for the students, and they earned it. They deserve it. So happy for the students. I'm so happy for Georgia Tech, and Yellow Jacket nation. Happy for Mr. Stansbury, and President Cabrera. And most importantly, I'm happy for you know, for our student athletes, our staff did a great job at game preparation. And I'm telling you that game on Sunday versus Clayton State was good for us. It just got us some energy back and you know, got us back into the, into the flow and so really proud of our guys. I thought Rodney Howard and Khalil Moore were sort of like the MVP with just non scoring plays. They just made so many 5050 balls and just tough hardnosed plays to help us win the game. Obviously, Jordan Usher, Michael Devoe, Kyle Sturdivant, and Deebo gave us great minutes as well. And our bench was so enthusiastic and energized. Awesome win. Look, it's not easy when you're, you know, you're you've had some, you know, misses and some losses in the during ACC play and to be able to come back to beat the first-place team against a great Florida State team. Just so proud of our guys. The energy was great. And it's a great win for Georgia Tech and Yellow Jacket nation."

Josh, you said that you wanted to shorten the bench and many people kind of maybe didn't understand that, but it certainly worked tonight kind of what did what did it mean to use your timeouts differently? Just how did you approach that with keeping the energy up against their full court press while playing dynamic defense?

"I thought our defense was really good. We only had nine turnovers against you know, Florida State's just such a great defensive team they lead the ACC in steals and for us to have only nine turnovers is a great stat. three the first half so just really proud of our guys but no I said we needed, you know, you guys know me I usually play six or seven guys. And that's what I usually play and I've been this year I played a lot trying to search and find our group and so look we just our team still a work in progress and it maybe took us a while to kind of figure out that and we got to this point that doesn't mean it's always going to stay just like that but I felt that was best and I just think it's you know, you let guys play through some things doesn't always mean it's going to work itself out but you know, we're, I think how I've done it in the past that's kind of what I've done. Less is more in a sense, but everyone's got to stay ready and doesn't mean we can't go longer than the seven I played our guys can different guys can be in and out of the rotation."

It's just I felt for tonight. We had to shorten it and tighten a little bit and fortunately worked out. And so, guys made plays and just so proud of our young men. They really just stepped up and did a great job. So proud of our guys."

The two of your players that we talked to after the game, instead of talking offense, they were talking defense. So, the message is really gotten through and it shows with the way they played, 17 turnovers for Florida State, double figure steals, especially in the first half. So that zone was really jumping tonight.

"Just so proud of our guys, defensively, I thought our transition defenses really good. But you know, that also helps when you only had nine turnovers. Now, we first half I mean, we were, we were shooting it, you know, like we did against Clayton State, I think we were eight for 19, the first half from three, which is 42%, we cooled off a little bit, the second half. But, you know, obviously, when you're making those shots, that goes a long way. But really just our defense was good. That's been a staple of our program of what we do defensively. And that was also within our transition defense. And our transition defense was really, really good. So, you know, I was just really proud of the way we defended, way we got after it. And just, you know, our defense is what we do is what we are you know, and, and to be great defensively, which is a controllable, the first thing is first, and that is to make sure you do a great job in transition defense. And, and today, this evening, we did a good job and transition defense which allowed us to get, you know, get our defense set up and in cause, you know, kind of getting the passing meets. And look, I think Florida State's really good. They're big. They're very well coached. They've got great players. You know, you guys, you know how, like I said, from the top, you know how I feel about Coach Hamilton. So anytime you have a chance to win against a program like at Florida State, I put them in the same league as Duke and North Carolina. You look at their program. So great win for Georgia Tech."

Talk to us a little bit more about Rodney Howard's game, you know, he got a couple quick fouls. He didn't get a ton of rebounds. But some very important rebounds. But somehow, he hung in there for the whole game against a very big team, his physical presence alone was significant. Talk to us more about his game.

"A couple things. Number one is I thought Rodney Howard, you know, he's been out with injury. And that's got us that's, you know, that obviously throws you off, you know, off, out of sync and out of rhythm. So, he's been out for a while, and then he had to come back, and it's taken them you know, the game versus Wake Forest and the game versus Clayton State is just taking some time to get there. And so, really proud of Ronnie, I just thought, I told Ronnie before the game, he's just got to be a motor guy, a motor motor motor. It's got to be a motor big, just kind of moving all over the place making effort plays. And that's what he did tonight. I said I want you to stick out like a sore thumb in a good way, and that the way that you're just playing so hard that everyone's seeing the activity that you're doing and, and that's what he did tonight. And like I said, he's one of our MVPs. And in a lot of the things he did, didn't show up in the box score."

It seems like Deebo (Dallan Coleman) is finally maybe getting to that point in his freshman year that he's becoming more comfortable and is becoming a bigger factor with what you're trying to do on both ends of the court.

"Really proud of Deebo, hit big shots for us, had some tough hardnosed plays, and he's continued to get better. I mean, you know, he made big plays, he had that big pull up that rimmed in for us. It was a big basket, I forget when that was, but we had a little bit of a scoring drought again, but he made some big shots, and he had that big one I think was 57-53 and he hit the pull up. So, I'm just proud of Deebo he's just continuing to get better. Just got to continue to stay with it. Really, really proud of him."

It seemed like they had some success going big but you guys' kind of dictated the game in the second half and they went small to match up against you guys with the way you're playing defense. Talk about how you were able to get accomplished that they have multiple seven footers and those guys just didn't play a lot of the second half because of the way you guys were pulling away and pushing them on defense so much.

"I mean look the bottom line is you know whether we played big and we played obviously I you know we played small for 10 minutes of the game because Rodney played 30 minutes, but you know small can be effective for us. I was a little concerned when Khalid went out of the game when he got fouled out but and he made big free throws for us by the way, Khalid, you know hit big free throws for us, but you know, we just whether we were small or big it was a good you know, it was it was a good we just played hard It didn't matter. though our transition defense now you're guarding the basket stopping the ball loading to the ball. And then from there, you know, playing your defense you know, we just we got it done. And that's it's not easy when you know, we've added up quite a few losses in ACC and obviously we went on Sunday and you're playing the number one team and obviously doesn't get any easier on Saturday with Miami coming but our guys had to dig in and full credit to our staff and their game preparation and, and just really proud of our guys. Jordan. Jordan Usher's energy. I mean, he's, I tell you, Jordan, how far has Jordan Usher come. Remember when he played against Ball State and I mean, in Hawaii, I we didn't know if he was even a division one player. Now look at him. He's got five assists, no turnovers five steals. he just was such a floor general his energy. That's called an energy giver. A positive energy giver. Great shout out to Jordan Usher on that really proud of him."

You took 27 three pointers; I think this season high. So, I mean, how much of that was what they were giving you? It seemed like they were defending so well inside that maybe that was kind of the shots you had? Or how would you describe that, that balance?

"I just think it's a balance. I think, you know, in this day and age you got we don't live and die by the three. But today, we needed to make threes. And when we're smaller at times, I mean, some of our scoring issues have been when we're not making shots. And we've got good shooters, we just got to step up and, and knock him down. And we've gotten you know, when we get good looks, we just got to let it go and fire it and I got no problem with our shots. I thought our shots were great. When You're open, be ready to shoot it. Deivon had a big play, too. I want to make sure that I'm at reverse. That was a big basket too when we had a scoring drought as well, too. So, when we're open, we got to fire it. I got no problem. Half our shots are threes. And for this year, that just might be the way it is when we're open. Gotta let it go."

Did it feel a little bit like, you know, you talk so much about like, actually, about yesterday about, you know, the fine line between winning and losing and getting the bounces and like, you know, I kind of think of the shot that Kyle hit in the lane that hit the rim and went straight up and went back in. Did it feel like a lot of those things went your way more than they had?

"I thought the ball bounced our way today, you know, and that's what happens. Sometimes the ball bounces your way and usually evens itself out. Today. It bounced our way a lot of times this year, maybe it hadn't. Even though I was thinking like in the first half when Mike missed that layup and they come down and hit a three was a five-point swing. I said Goodness gracious. I said maybe it's just the ball isn't bouncing our way, but it did bounce our way tonight. It's just such a fine line. But, when you play with that intensity defensively, usually the ball finds that rhythm, flow, energy back to it and you get the bounces. So, you know, we got a little lucky, that happens."