

Coaches Quotes
Florida State 79, Louisville 70
Saturday, January 8, 2022
Donald L. Tucker Center
Tallahassee, Florida

Louisville Head Coach Chris Mack

Opening Statement

“Let me start off by saying that Florida State played lights out, especially early on, you know, better than they've shot the ball really in a while. I thought they played downhill. They're terrific in transition, you know, although we kept our turnovers down, fairly down, for the game, not so much in the first half, they got some two on ones and three on twos and they're just such a hard team to stop in transition. But, our inability to play any type of defense in the first half set the tone the wrong way. And second half I thought some of our reserves -- guys like Sydney Curry, El Ellis, Mason Faulkner, Dre Davis -- they came in and made some plays, and we were much better on the defensive end. Thought we had a few looks where, you know, we couldn't quite get over the hump. We'd cut it to three cut to four, and we'd have an open really good generated shot, you know, just open from three other guys that we want shooting and couldn't find those ones to go in. So that's basketball, but if we didn't defend it like we did in the second half in the first half, then it might have been a much different game. Caleb Mills is a talent. We knew that coming in. And he certainly proved it. Thank heavens he was a little foul trouble otherwise he might have gotten 50.”

You mentioned the difference between the first half and second half. Mason Faulkner one of the reasons or one of the differences that he saw was hitting more fire from the team in the second half. Did you see the same thing and how frustrating is it as a coach, you know, to go into a road place like that, and maybe not see your team come out with the power that you want?

“It was certainly our defensive effort that allowed us to get back in the game. I thought they missed some easy ones early on in the second half. But then I thought our defense defended and didn't allow anything and so it's really frustrating. We actually came out with a decent start, but the decent start wasn't what it needed to be on the defensive end. We were sort of trading baskets those first four or five minutes, I think it was 12-11 after the first TV timeout or something of that effect. That's just not hard enough on Florida State. So fixed in a halftime but obviously you know, you got to play two halves against a really good team at their place.”

Looked like you threw a little bit of zone at them in the first half. Why did you want to do it and what did you like and dislike about it?

“We've watched a few of their earlier games and Florida State is so athletic, and they played downhill so much into the games. When they played against the zone, they were a little bit more stagnant. They seem to pass the ball around the perimeter and take the three without really threatening the rim like they would in man to man. And you know, we worked on it, you know, something that we have in our pocket. We haven't really used it a whole lot this year. I think we've used it in a couple of possessions, but they...sports go so quickly, and you probably couldn't tell we were in-zone in other games. I thought it was fairly effective. But they hit a couple of tough shots and in anything that we did in the first half...Brett wasn't very successful on that end of the floor.”

You had some shots in the corner that just doesn't go. When you're in a situation where you like the shots you're getting and they just don't fall...what do you tell the team to kind of keep them from getting a little frustrated and beat their head against the wall?

“To keep generating them like we were. Florida State's very unorthodox switching everything, being on top challenging at the rim with three and four guys and running past close outs. It's not something that everybody sees. And I thought that the end of the first half we went too much isolation ball and just watched the ball handler and we started to do that in the second half and took a timeout to explain to guys like, do you know the offense? Run the offense and find those opportunities in the offense that where we can get in the lane, lanes under control, shot fake, pass fake, back cut, and we really started to do that. We looked for one another, we made the extra pass and we got much better shots the last 15 minutes of the game. Offense wasn't the problem for this game. It might have been for a small stretch. It was the defensive side of the ball that killed us in the first half.”

Graduate Guard Mason Faulkner

What was the difference there in the second half to the first half defensively and what did you think broke down in that first half defensively?

"I just feel like the intensity...I feel like we were playing on our toes the whole first half with the dude [Caleb Mills] scoring 20 points in the first half kind of shocked us as far as team wise we never got a grasp of our defensive mentality or defensive tendencies. We were not fully locked in in the first half and firstly in second half people played with some fire. I thought people on the bench we were down and when we made a run, we cut it to two with forcing a foul, with some costly fouls. They were in the bonus, so it was easy to get fouls for them."

You guys had some opportunities, in the second half, some pretty good shots that didn't fall. Is the offense at a point where it starts to get frustrating when you're getting some of these chances and chances aren't going down?

"When you play in another person's gym, you have that option. As far as following in crunch time of the game, and unfortunately tonight, when it was time to hit a shot or go on a run or capitalizing on a run with our defense, we weren't able to, and that's what happened, but coach emphasized that our defense has to be our stronghold. We felt like our defense was our stronghold in the second half. Unfortunately, the shots didn't fall at the end."

How do you as a player, you know fight through that try to overcome the scoring droughts? Is there something that you guys can do in practice or, or what needs to be done to try to minimize those?

"I don't really think it's a remedy...it's just hitting shots. I think that as a basketball player, it's a game of runs. So you know, some nights you hit shots, all the shots, sometimes you can't. We're playing big time basketball, we're in Florida State's gym. Unfortunately tonight the ball didn't go our way but you know, were going to keep being in the gym, keep getting better, trusting each other in those shots because we will add up and we had chances. Everyone felt like we had chances tonight to win the game and unfortunately the ball didn't go our way."

Do you feel good about the shots you guys were getting, the shots you created?

"I feel good about the shots we were creating. I feel like they were wide open and honestly, as far as like getting in the lane on transition, pass out three, some layups and got tips. We got to the foul line. I feel like at the end you know the shots are just in and out. Sometimes you get away with shooters, but we going to keep going to those guys, will keep making those decisions and transitioning and keep getting better and making shots."