

Coaches Quotes

Florida State 59, Tulane 54

November 17, 2021

Donald L. Tucker Center, Tallahassee, Fla.

Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton

Opening Statement

Tonight's second half we go zero of eight, and four of 10 from the free throw line. I thought those would be two of our strongest attributes as a team and we still come away with a victory. Because obviously we are not playing real well right now. Teams going through those periods where they just seem like they cannot get it together. We have had some challenges and we've just got to work our way through them. You got to give Tulane a lot of credit. I thought their zone made us somewhat lethargic and created some indecision on our part, to their credit. We made just enough plays in order for us to get a win. I thought our defense got a little better in the second half and see that they shot 19 percent; but we didn't shoot a whole lot better, we shot 34 percent. The problem is that in order for us to be successful we need our veterans to give us leadership and be consistent. We need our inexperienced players to step up and learn from our veterans, and gain more confidence. Tonight it was a little bit of a reverse, I thought our inexperienced players stepped up and gave us some good play. Our veterans obviously did not play as well as we have all seen them play and know they are capable of playing. So that still gives me a very positive feeling knowing that I have seen our veterans play well many times and hopefully we just need a little more time to gain our confidence and work things out."

Could you talk about the lift Cam'Ron Fletcher gave you guys down the stretch and that little burst you guys had. He had that good finish and then that big dunk.

"There is no doubt that Cam'Ron has the potential to be a very good player for us. We have four perimeter players and one center, but on out of bounds plays we do give them numbers of 1, 2, 3, 4. Well he was more or less than what we call a fourth position tonight, and that was a little unsettling for him tonight. He wasn't quite sure of some of the things that we needed him to do. I thought he didn't stop giving effort; he gave us tips, got that big rebound, and he hit a big jump shot, and he made a huge play down the stretch. And that's what he is capable of giving. We just need to smooth things out and have everyone playing with the level of confidence that we think is necessary in order for us to be successful. I was very pleased with how our inexperienced guys seemed to be a little more relaxed tonight than our veterans."

I wanted to ask you about another kind of inexperienced guy Caleb Mills tonight, how much trust do you and your coaching staff really have in him. He played more than anyone else tonight, and he seems like really a key contributor on both ends for you.

"You know the way that we play. I think you have watched us over the years. Every night always seems somewhat different. Tonight he (Caleb) seemed to be a little more in tune and played with the level of confidence that we thought he was. His ball handling skills, his passing skills, and his confidence set him apart tonight. Even though he didn't have a great shooting night, I thought he stepped up with a lot of confidence and he played with a lot of determination, and focus. He just showed that he has a little more experience than our other new first year player."

RayQuan Evans had four blocks and did a good job on the defensive end. But what are you kind of seeing out of him on the offensive end, you know especially running the point?

"RayWuan is a very conscientious youngster. He is a great teammate, has an unselfish spirit, he seems to always find a way to come up when you need him. I thought that was his competitive spirit tonight, when he wasn't having

a great offensive night, he showed up on the defensive end with his blocks and also his ability to contain the dribbling. He was a good leader on the defensive end.”

Do you think some of the older guys are just trying to figure out how everything fits together with kind of a new line up?

“I think what happens is that overall you can’t be a good leader if you have guys that are following, who are not real sure as to exactly how they fit in. We are in a development stage right now; that’s where we are and that’s understandable. You know we have always had a deep rotation, but we have never had this many first year guys that need to be consistent in order for us to be successful. There is some indecision. There is some uncertainty that is only natural to have when you have first year players in your program. That’s where we are. We are going to work our way through it, and hopefully in not too long we will be a lot more consistent. Not to take away anything from Tulane. I thought they had a great game play, they made some timely shots, they had some guys that made some consistent jump shots. I thought we defended very well and had we not turned it up a little defensively in the second half, the game could have been different. We did play pretty good defense in the second half, when you look at those numbers offensively you have to give them defense a little credit. They balled us up a little bit, it was a different type of match up that’s all, than what we’ve been accustomed to. And hopefully next time we face one we will be a little more efficient. We ended up running our main offense because of their match up, and it gave us some good looks. We are known to make open looks, and I think that this team is an excellent three point shooting team. I think we are going to shoot a high percentage from the free throw line, but tonight, it’s obvious that we were not a very confident team. We are not very relaxed right now; we are going through a development stage, which I guess is only normal when you have as many moving parts as we’ve had. With Tanor (Ngom) not being able to play at all, moving Malik (Osborne), got some inexperienced things going on, but I think it’s all good. We just hope that we can continue keep on winning while we put it together.”

How much are you still experimenting with different lineups and different rotations at this part of the season?

“This is our third game, it’s only natural to be experimenting with as many new guys, we have had Tanor (Ngom) out with an injury, we are playing Malik (Osborne) in one position and then we move him to another, and we have a whole other set of guys who are adjusting to playing at this level. So we do have a lot of moving parts, we are not in sync yet. I do not have a set rotation. We are kind of allowing our guys to determine how the rotation evolves. You see John Butler playing a little earlier tonight and it’s because he’s earned it. We are learning about this team. We are learning things in the heat of the battle that you don’t sometimes learn when you are in practice.”

Anthony Polite was able to go to the glass and get some rebounds, can you just talk about his contribution and guys just trying to help the cause

“I think that says a lot about his character. He’s been known for being a marksman, an unbelievable three point shooter and his shot went far tonight. He showed up on the defensive end, he gave his physicality by getting the rebounds, and that says a lot about his character, but that’s the experience of a guy who has been here for four years that when a shot is not falling, you find other ways to help us win.”

**Malik Osborne
Redshirt Senior Forward**

Everyone is going to come at you guys because of what you guys have done the last few years, did you feel like you guys responded with the intensity you needed to with the way they were coming at you guys?

“I feel like at the end we did, at the beginning we did not. It was one of those learning experiences again where the younger guys have to know that even if a team is not highly ranked, even if they are not in a top 5 conference, they

are going to come at us with their best shot. With the reputation that Florida State has built, everybody knows where we came from, they know where the program has come from, and they know where the program essentially is to this day. We have to understand that we have to be on our A game every single game. Regardless of what the team is, regardless of what their record is, regardless of who they lost to before, regardless of if we've beaten them plenty of times in the past, we've got to come with it every single game, or else we are going to go out there and get embarrassed."

Malik, that was a scrappy team, as you say, they got out there and they competed, but at the end of the day, you guys won the game. You played some four, you helped the cause, just talk about what you were able to do and what your team was able to do to win this game.

"Personally me, my thing was just to keep us all together and bring the energy to provide a spark for us. This team (Tulane) was very scrappy. Every time we made a play, they responded and that was kind of the theme of the entire game. My whole role was to just to keep giving us that spark, keep holding the team together, and then just crash the boards and do whatever I need to do to win. I just think crashing the boards and providing that defensive presence was what I needed to do. As far as the rest of the team, as you can see at the end, we had the vets in and we all knew how to win games like this. We've been in situations where we watched and been a part of games like this, and we just knew we had to crank it up to another level, defensively and on the boards. That's what we did and that's how we were able to pull off a win."

Caleb Mills was really big for you guys in the first half and Cam'Ron Fletcher was really big for you guys in the second half. How have those two guys fit into what you are trying to do here and what kind of role do you think they could play on this team?

"I would say for Caleb, he is a very quick defender. He is very gifted when it comes to scoring, he is able to create his own shot, find a shot, and get a bucket when we need to, which he kind of showed today multiple times. Then Cam, he is just a very very, very hard working player, he's just really aggressive defensively, he has a lot of athleticism and great instincts to get us rebounds and jump the passing lane, and make it really hard for the other team to run their offense or just feel comfortable when they have the ball. Then as you see, he has a shooting stroke too as well. He is able to hit the outside shots, as well as crash the glass and drive as well. So, both are versatile players that provide a lot of things for us, they kind of fit into Florida State with their versatility, able to guard one-five, able to play multiple positions offensively, and able just to do everything; crash, shoot, defend, rebound; everything that we expect a Florida State player to do."