

Coaches Quotes
Florida State 60 vs. Syracuse 63
Donald L. Tucker Center
Tallahassee, Florida State University
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Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton

Opening Statement

"Obviously, we're extremely disappointed that we didn't find a way to make a lot of open looks, make some of the plays we needed to down the stretch. During a couple periods in the game, we seemed to go dry. This first half I thought there were a couple of periods where we just didn't, couldn't find a way to put the ball in the basket. The second half, I thought we had excellent offensive opportunities. We went through a stretch there where they were doing a very good job on the offensive end, and we just maintained and shot 40 percent during that period. You don't expect to hold a team that shoots that well from around the perimeter. They have a very good isolation game going. During that period, we just couldn't maintain the scoring output with them. I thought we dug that hole that was very difficult for us to get back and dig out of. I'm sure the youngsters were somewhat frustrated because I thought we actually executed our offense to the point where we had wide open looks and uncontested shots. It's one of those days where they just weren't falling for us, and during that period I thought that was to our demise."

Were you disappointed with the amount of three pointers your team attempted, in the sense of settling for shots instead of trying to generate something against that zone?

"The challenge for us was that we've been accustomed to having an interior presence, the balance out our perimeter game. So it was somewhat more highlighted, because we have not developed the interior part of our system where it bounces out and takes the pressure off the perimeter part. We could probably have attacked the basket a little more off the ball reversals, but I thought their defense had something to do with that. We had the looks that I thought were giving us an opportunity to maintain. We look back at how well they shoot the ball at practice, where we shot the ball at time. Some of our best guys just couldn't ... It's one of those nights where it just didn't fall. I also think, on the defensive and the second half, I thought that they flexed their muscles and did a very good job of isolating the ball and then getting in the lane and kicking out. I thought that they got on their offensive run, we went on a drought, and we dug a hole for ourselves that we almost dug ourselves out of. Once you get down like that is awful hard to come back."

Naheem McLeod played 13 minutes to give you some good buckets down with some rebounds. What did you see from him in his first game back there?

"There's no doubt that Naheem (McLeod) has potential to grow and develop. But he is where a lot of our big men have been coming in the door, but we normally have somebody like Tanor (Ngom) or somebody that's an experienced guy that can kind of not put them in situations where they had to carry the load and maybe be a little farther along than what their experience says they should be. I thought he came in tonight and gave us really good minutes, especially in the first half. He came in during the second half and did a good job, got himself three buckets. So it shows a little bit of a potential of what he could be...now that we don't have Tanor for a long period of time. We just need him to step up a little bit and be a lot more consistent."

Caleb Mills had a nice first half, but he didn't get a lot of shots for a while in the second half. Were they doing anything defensively to limit his shots?

"No, Syracuse plays their zone defense. They don't necessarily take any one particular person out of the system. I think the light of experience we have executing against this zone defense had a lot to do with maybe him not getting more touches and more good looks. You know, the execution of our zone offense ... with the exception of when we played Tulane, we haven't played against a traditional two-three zone defense. I did notice the other day as we started preparing, I did notice that our newcomers were a little hesitant, you know, as we start putting together the game plan that goes through our offensive preparing for this particular game. Normally we've been very effective against two three zone defenses, and tonight we had the shots that we wanted. Tonight was one of those unusual nights where the shots just didn't fall. But I thought that we got really good looks. But I thought one thing we just

did not do - we didn't balance our inside interior offensive opportunities with the opportunity that we got on the perimeter."

Talk about RayQuan Evans coming back today, and you know with everything he's been through recently...what you saw?

"Obviously, you come back with a heavy heart. You're the point guard on a team; you jump in and haven't been practicing much. Because this is his third year with us, I thought he's a little bit more familiar of what we need from that position and from our team. I thought he gave us really good leadership. First year players gave a pretty good account of themselves, but we weren't quite as crisp, weren't quite as sharp. We had two or three dry spells where our execution just wasn't as sharp as it has been with some of the more experienced teams that we've had."

Asking about Cam'Ron Fletcher and just wearing the mask. I mean, how much pain or discomfort is that for him?

"I don't exactly know what in his face that he has fractured. He can give you the technical term. But it's obviously, it's uncomfortable, and we have to try to get it custom-made for him. But we didn't have enough time to do that - to scan his face, but his face was swollen. He couldn't get a custom fit. And being uncomfortable, being distracted, not being able to see, I'm sure that was not a good experience for him. But that's part of college basketball. That's part of the youthful development of our team. We need to go through this, everybody goes through it. Last year, we had a couple teams in our league that obviously went through what we're going through right now. We just got to make sure that we win our share of our games while we're still growing and developing so that we will have some opportunities at the end of the season to continue playing in the postseason."

I know the offensive struggles you had a lot during the game, but defensively you hold someone like Buddy Boeheim with six points. What do you think about the defensive scheme?

"We had our moments, but we played very good defense. Our lack of offensive, we went through that period where we didn't guard them and I think that they outscored us like 11 or something, 11-0 run. We had great opportunities on the offensive end that we didn't finish. So your defense is highlighted because they went on a run, but we probably had easier and higher percentage shots on our end than what they had in their defensive end. We didn't maintain the scoring pace. With a young team, sometimes you get discouraged and not be mature enough to handle that. We show some signs of our inexperience tonight. I thought that, I don't know how many points (Buddy) Boeheim scored, but I thought we did a very good job on him. But that comes with a cost. When you put that much attention to a guy like that, then you have other guys that pick up the slack. They had five guys after double figures before him and still got double figures. And I'm not really sure that, like I said earlier, that we didn't have as many good opportunities on offensive end as what they had."

Forward Malik Osborne

How are the guys, did you feel like there was pressure during that stretch where you guys are struggling offensively with guys putting too much pressure on themselves to make shots?

"Personally, I feel like there could have been a little pressure; everybody wants to do really well in crunch time. We knew how much this game meant, not just for ourselves but just for the program trying to set this ACC record for most consecutive ACC home wins. I know there's a lot of pressure and some guys were in positions that they've never been in before, especially late game and with different roles. I'd definitely say pressure definitely could have been a factor. Especially since we're such a really good shooting team, to four from 30 from three, I don't know exactly what we went from the line. I can't really say but yeah it just it was a tough shooting night overall for us as there was a lot of pressure. I'm pretty sure it was a mental battle as far as a lot of guys who didn't hit us previously coming up to that moment and then just trying to make the right play, or you know, not take another shot, coming down the stretch."

Can a week off for exams and just practice and shooting, not worry about games, opponents, that kind of thing. Can it be good for you guys to maybe recalibrate a little bit?

"I will say in this situation, it probably will be good to take a couple of days, maybe a day or two just to get our mind off of basketball. Just refocus, restart each other, just get a new focus and kind of put this behind us. I know for some, it may be hard as well, just especially vets, knowing you know where we come from that this is something

that we know we should handle. We just kind of let it slip through our fingers. So it'll be a big self check, a big reflection on ourselves and what we need to do and what we need to bring coming next game and going forward, especially in conference play. It could be a little bit of both, but I definitely see this as motivation but right now this is just something that, this is a self-reflection time."