

Coaches Quotes
Florida State 76, Syracuse 71
Saturday, January 15, 2022
Carrier Dome
Syracuse, N.Y.

Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton

Opening Statement

"I always thought that this game was a game of runs; we got down ten in the first half and made a run. I thought in the second half it was like we were trading baskets. They shot a high field goal percentage and so did we. We had some different line-ups out there on the floor, different guys stepped up, gave us some good solid play. Quincy (Ballard) hadn't played very much but he blocked a big shot. Naheem (McLeod) hadn't played very much but he got a big lob for us. Harrison (Prieto) came in and just gave us good leadership with his experience. It was one of those typical ACC blowouts, where the game could have gone either way. I was very proud of the execution in our half-court offense that we did once we got into the half court. A big game for us."

You were obviously not happy with the execution offensively the first time you guys played them, how pleased were you with how far they came this time around?

"In reality, when I went back and looked at the game, we got great shots, maybe high percentage shots then we did tonight, but they just didn't fall (in the first game on December 4). We had one of those games where literally we just weren't quite as sharp as we needed to be and tonight we were a little more focused. I think we played a little more relaxed mentally and emotionally, and obviously we executed pretty well, made pretty good decisions, and our shots were falling. I think we showed a little growth, some maturity and that's what you like to see from your kids this time of year. Plus, the fact, that without having Malik (Osborne), one of our leaders it was different guys accepting different roles. We did not know what to expect from the guys who hadn't played very much at all. We had the center position being played by committee – Naheem (McLeod), Quincy (Ballard), and Harrison (Prieto) -- and they all made some plays of the course of the game that I thought made a difference and gave us a chance to win."

You guys faced that ten-point deficit obviously against that two-three zone, you want to be able to get your shots, especially from three point land how gratifying was it to not only shoot outside that deficit but also get those important threes to get you guys back in it?

"There is no doubt that that was huge for us. We had the same shots down in Tallahassee and those didn't fall. Our guys executed better but we had more time to practice and prepare for the zone, so I thought mentally they were a lot more relaxed."

Did you guys prepare in practice that Malik Osborne was not going to be able to go, in other words, were you able to get Quincy Ballard in rhythm these last couple days?

"Not really, not really, we did not know that he was not going to be able to play until the day before we left (Friday). But we practice our guys all the time in all different kinds of positions, so we do not ever put starting line ups together. Its just sort of a maturing process that the guys are going through, and Quincy is a little bit more confident than he was earlier in the year and so is Naheem."

You have talked about Harrison (Prieto), obviously guys like him and Justin have difficult roles I'm sure where they may not play at all or they may get thrown in if there is a injury or if there is foul trouble things like that. What can you say about the quality minutes that he gave y'all tonight?

"There is no doubt that we have a tremendous amount of confidence in Harrison (Prieto). We know that he is going to give us what he has, he understands our system, he executes very well, and I thought that he really gave us tremendous leadership. He gives us leadership when he is not playing. The big guys, they respect him so much, they always ask him what they could be doing better, so this was Harrison just being Harrison we know we can always count on him."

RayQuan Evans is a pretty unique player but tonight, it seemed he was really important for you guys on offense, can you just talk about his performance?

“He is extremely confident, and he knocked down some jumpers and he executed and got us in and out of our system very well, and I thought (Jalen) Warley gave us great floor leadership tonight, he was on point, made some good passes there in the first half and got us a couple buckets.”

Do you have any idea, any potential optimism about getting Malik (Osborne) and having him available Tuesday or do you think you will be without him?

“I doubt that he will be available Tuesday, I doubt it. I mean it could be but I doubt it.”

Leonard, there was a point there where you guys had a chance, a run out a chance to maybe go up by eight but they called a charge and the Syracuse comes back and takes the lead, but then you guys came back and battled back again is that more of the maturity that you have been seeing lately from this team?

“We did not panic, we stayed focused. That just shows that we are growing up and maturing. There was no one doubting themselves or doubting the system, we just came back and huddled up and in fact it was quite the contrary a lot of positive conversation from our guys, and I thought that was when we focused more and executed very well.”