

Coaches Quotes
Florida State 72, Virginia Tech 85
Saturday, January 29, 2022
Donald L. Tucker Center
Tallahassee, Fla.

Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton

Opening Statement

"I think with about seven, a little under eight minutes to go, we were within striking distance. I think it was a two-point game. That's when I thought fatigue set in, and we just didn't have enough energy there to play the way that we've been accustomed to playing. When they scored four threes and a two, I thought they kind of broke our back. It's interesting how this day has developed. We knew that Malik (Osborne) was not going to play, we just didn't know exactly what the status of the other two guys were, Caleb (Mills) and Ray (Evans). We found out at game time with Ray and Caleb was not feeling very well so we didn't think he (Caleb) was going to play at all. He tried to make himself available when he found out that Ray wasn't playing. It's just one of those days that I always say those basketball demons raise their ugly heads. I thought on the defensive end we did a good job defending their normal offense, and to their credit, they kind of scrapped the offense and went to an iso (isolation) type of system that we didn't defend very well. They had unbelievable range; they did a great job. I thought that they played the style that it took for them to be successful on the road at Florida State. I have to give them credit for that, but we have to learn from this game or else the next game will be just as tough going on the road to try to get a victory at Clemson."

You have obviously been through a lot of things within basketball but when you have a week like this with young players how do you keep them from getting discouraged by these things that are happening one after another these last few days

"This is part of testing your character. You have to challenge them and hold them accountable. When you look over the years you, we have had very few times where we have lost three players in a short period of time. But that happens to other teams as well. We have been very fortunate to not have to deal with losing basically three starters, and it kind of happened to us all at once where you don't really have an opportunity to prepare for it. Sometimes that can be discouraging to young players, but that is who we are. This edition of the Seminole basketball team, I look out there and at one time I had four first year guys out there and against a bunch of more mature older players. That is not an excuse that's just what we are. We just have to play a little harder, pay a little more attention to detail, execute a little better, to make up for what we don't have in experience. Now the challenge for us in this particular game is that we have been accustomed to rotating our players, you know every four to five minutes so now we are extending guys for seven or eight straight minutes trying to play with the same level of energy that we have been accustomed too. The playing length kind of caught up with us there in a little period. We tried to keep them as fresh as possible but that's why with the way we play and the style that we play. Sometimes it is difficult to adjust in a game like this but that is the nature of college basketball and we have to find a way to overcome it and make sure that we necessarily adjust for answers. We have been trying to switch one through five and I am not quite sure we can do that with Naheem McLoed, so we will have to make adjustments to another defensive system. When a team always has one person that they can relieve pressure with, then you've got four guys doing a great job denying the ball and always have one guy open relieving pressure. That's is kind of what happened to us a little bit tonight. A lot of those threes were because they knew we switched, and they took advantage of that and that's too their credit. I did not expect them to shoot that well, if they were in a gym by themselves with no defense on you it is hard to go 18-25. I guess that's what they did was it 18-25. It is hard to shoot that way being in the gym with no defense just shooting around. But they got themselves in that magic level in their focus and the offense, I thought we did a great job defending their offense except for a couple of spirts. The three-point shooting hurt us in the first half, and then it hurt us in that spirt. You got to give them credit for playing the way they had to play in order for them to have a chance to win."

Redshirt Senior Anthony Polite

Take us back into that contest against Virginia Tech.

"It was a tough one. I don't think they could have shot better than what they did tonight. The basket for them was as big as it could have been. My wrist is fine, I'll be okay, just out there fighting. It is definitely a tough loss, but we're going to come back, regroup, learn from our mistakes. We have a young team, we had a couple guys that weren't able to go tonight so we had to make a couple adjustments, and I'm sure we'll be ready to fight on Wednesday against Clemson."

Mentally, when a team is shooting as well as Virginia Tech did tonight, what do you try to do mentally and with this team to keep yourself from getting discouraged and try to finish out the game?

"I think we just have to listen a little better, execute little details, close out harder, try to make them catch the ball a little bit further from the three-point line so they don't catch it in rhythm and be able to knock their shots down like they did tonight. I feel like we did a pretty good job, but whatever we did, the ball was going in, so we are going to have to play harder and give a little bit more to make our opponents miss."

Do you feel like this team can get back to playing the way you guys are used to?

"I'm 100 percent sure that we will. It's still a long season. I don't think that we've played our best yet. We've showed the potential of what we can be. We showed certain games where we haven't played our best, but we never got to the point where everybody on the team showcased what they can do at the same time, so I believe the ceiling for this team is still very high."