

Coaches Quotes
Florida State 69, Clemson 75
Wednesday, February 2, 2022
Littlejohn Coliseum
Clemson, S.C.

Clemson Head Coach Brad Brownell

Opening Statement

"That was hard fought ACC basketball. I am really pleased with the way we defended late. Offensively we were outstanding. Part of our bench gave us a huge lift. Nick (Honor), Naz (Bohannon), Alex (Hemenway) and all those guys came off the bench and played very well offensively, which gave us a big boost. It's not easy adjusting without Hunter (Tyson) getting injured in the game. We had a couple guys playing a couple of different positions that they really had not practiced that much. But our guys adjusted well. We were in foul trouble in the first half and guys hung in there. It's a great team win. We're really proud of our team. We showed a very good toughness and competitive fight, especially defensively in the second half."

What was it like when PJ picked up that second foul with 10 minutes left in the first half and Hunter (Tyson) getting injured...how did it feel with that nine-point lead going into the locker room?

"PJ has got to learn he can't make that second foul. As a young player, he has to mature if he wants to be an elite player in this league. We talked to him about it. He is a happy, go lucky kid. I'll say he's the only kid I've ever coached that's encouraging the crowd at the free throw line....which we probably need to have a conversation about. That's who he is every day. He's a fun kid to coach. I think he felt bad because of the Duke game a little bit where he had opportunities to make plays for us and didn't quite get it done. Today was really good. He made free throws. Those are big shots. Big kids stepping up making those crucial time shots is high level play. I'm so proud of him. We need him out there more. He makes better decisions, especially defensively."

Has PJ Hall's his competitiveness shown?

"Absolutely. He's a confident guy. He wants shots. He wants big plays. He's not going to shy away from it at all and that's what I love about him. Like with anything, you're going to have ebbs and flows. You're going to grow with it. There's going to be good times, and there's only times he doesn't quite get it done. But it's a learning experience. I think sometimes it's hard. We're a team where our best players a sophomore. We've had a mere slims last year with the NCAA Tournament and Amir's our leader. His defense was elite, his communication, all those little things. Now you're adjusting and your best players a sophomore and you count on him a lot. He's going to have good days and bad days, but he will be successful, and he will struggle. You saw a little bit of both in the halves of the game today."

Did you see PJ Hall's personality come out today?

"I don't know that PJ's a leader yet, but I think he's growing into one. Hunter Tyson is our leader, it's unquestionable. Naz (Bohannon) is growing into that; he's got a big voice, he's a mature guy, he's bright. He's been through the wars. Those two guys are the voices in our locker room the most. PJ tries, but he's got a lot on his plate. He just needs to focus on being a really good player. He still makes some mistakes that you hope he doesn't make, but it's part of the process. He's got a lot on his plate: a lot of ball screen coverages, calling plays, throwing the ball. He can make good decisions. He's got a lot to be really good. He leads by his animated personality. He's a fun loving, good guy to be around. I think where our guys feed off of him."

Can you talk about the spark from making those last shots

They were huge. Nick's (Honor) had some games where he's played well, but hasn't shot it as well. Then he comes in and played great against Duke. He was outstanding. When you look at the film, his feet are in the open court and he made some shots. He does nice things and I thought he built on it tonight. He's trying to guard arteries and do some defensive things. I had a couple of tough calls tonight, but I thought his energy was good, his speed is good, and his shot making is huge. We need that. We need him to be a confident shooter. When he does, it opens things up. And then Naz (Bohannon) just played like an experienced guy. He took what was there. They're very disruptive,

and there's things that they're taking away. You have to make some reads and he makes pretty good reads. He can move the ball and get the ball into places. It's not always the dribble, but sometimes with the pass. He's got a little spark of energy."

This was Chase Hunter third start in a row. It seems like that line-up is working pretty well for you?

"It helps us defensively. He's pretty good on ball. He's a little bigger and stronger, and does things that are good. We had a couple turnovers that he wants back. But he made a couple of big baskets. His athleticism and aggressiveness and ball handling and ability to dribble against pressure and get to spots on the court is good. He had another nice game and played well. He had to battle some foul trouble today."

Do you think there is something with Naz Bohannon coming off the bench?

"Absolutely. I think no matter what happened with Hunter, it's been nice to bring Naz and Nick off the bench, and even Alex Hemingway, to play very well tonight. Naz is an energy giver. He just comes in and he's got juice. He's a live personality and our guys feed off him. Nick is fast and he can make a shot. There are some things that are different. And then Alex Hemenway comes off the bench and bangs in two quick threes. That's how we can be good. We need all of that. If Hunter can't play, we are going to have to make some adjustments."

Did you get into it a little more going down the stretch?

"I get into it most nights. When I get done with a game I'm pretty tired [laughing]. Cheering your team on, coaching every possession, trying to get your guys to defend the way we need to, keep them on task at all times...I just keep encouraging them. Our defense was really good late. Thank our crowd again. Students have been fantastic this year. This was a good win over a good team. This was important."

How important is it to keep the momentum going?

"It's really important. It's hard to win games, it's tough. You have to play really well and you have to keep it together. We hung in there and took a couple punches and it looked like it could turn there for a while. Our defense kind of held up and that's when we lost a few more possessions and were struggling to score. They made some adjustments that made it harder on us. We had a couple really bad turnovers. Our guards got picked a couple times. Those are tough ones to overcome. Defense has to sustain if you're going to win a game. And then late, we made some free throws, made some plays, got fouled, got it to good places on the court, and executed well enough to finish the game against a quality opponent."

Can you speak to you to PJ Hall's big plays in the game?

"We need him to protect our basket. I think that's an area that we have to keep coaching him to be better on that end. There were guys put in a lot of situations as a five man. He needs to be able to protect our basket in the paint for us to have a good defense. He did some nice things later in the game when I thought he was very poor early. The later the game, the better he got."

With a of four or five games at home, how important is this to hold?

"We have to be ready for Georgia Tech next. They're a feisty crew. I think one thing watching our league is that it's not a year where we have two or three number one seeds or two seeds. We don't have three teams in the top 10 or 15 like a lot of the years. But I think that the middle and even the bottom of the league, including ourselves, we're all pretty good. It's a product if you win a couple and you lose a couple, or you have a guy out and it comes down to a couple of possessions. I think our league has better depth and quality at the bottom. I think that's why it's not as easy for some of the teams at the top to pull away. You have to be ready every night. That'll be a really hard game for us. But then next week, we'll be big. We have three home games in five days. We need to play well and have a great crowd to help us."

Has Naz Bohannon made some big strides and gotten more comfortable?

"We had a long talk one time down in Charleston, a little bit about role definition and just things that we needed him to do and wanted him to do; the things he could do to help us. He just felt more comfortable and bought into

some things. He's just as a mature guy. He goes and plays and does his best and there's no question he's been a huge spark off the bench in a lot of games."

After Syracuse, is it just a matter of buying in?

"Yes, it's better. Part of the lineup change that's helped a little just being a little bigger. You're going to have some games like Syracuse. I was disappointed. We needed to readjust and make sure our guys understood that we are not going to out-score everyone. That's not who we are. We've have a lot of offensive minded guys and have more guys who can shoot and make more threes than in a lot of years in the past. But we're not going to get 80 a game, we don't play that way. We better sure up our defense a little bit, and we've gotten better that way."