

Coaches Quotes

Florida State 51, Pitt 56

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

Donald L. Tucker Center

Tallahassee, Florida

Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton

Opening Statement

"I thought that we were solid with our defense. I think we could've played better, when you look at the stats. You can tell that we did a pretty decent job with the exception of (Ithiel) Horton, who you can see, we had a hard time getting to him. But that's what happens. We were giving their lead scorer (John) Hugley who normally was their leading scoring leading rebounder a lot of attention ... his presence inside crowded us to give a lot of help on the interior. It was extremely challenging stopping him inside and then making sure that we were getting to the perimeter shooters. We came up a little short on them offensively. I thought the first half, we were a little bit impatient until about the 10-minute mark, I thought we executed a lot better. We got great shots when we moved the ball, we couldn't make any. Second half, I thought that we made some inexperienced mistakes, took a shot or two, misread each other, turned the ball over. In a close game like that, the team that plays with the most savvy down the stretch will probably win. When we look back at some of those free throws that were within the first half and then the second half, in a close game like that, it was free throws, a little big for us tonight, we just didn't seem to be able to hit them."

For the second straight game you guys didn't finish very well around the basket, you were 4 for 13 on layups, only had two dunks. How important when you're struggling shooting from the field is it for guys to get to the finish at the rim?

"We had several point-blank layups we just didn't finish and that has been a problem. I know that the answer might seem like its making excuses; bottom line is we've got to make them. I can say inexperience, I can say first-year players, but the bottom line is regardless, that's part of the development process where we've come up short last few games with high percentage shots that we didn't finish. That's kind of who we are. This is a unique opportunity for us to show that we can overcome some adversity. I've got to give Pittsburgh a lot of credit. It was like they would move the ball, set some screens. wait till they got the matchup they wanted, then drove in and it forced us to have to get some help. So, you have to pick your poison. If you give them out to help them to stop their leading scorer, which made it very difficult for us to get back to them to on the perimeter. Got to give them credit. Look at the overall shooting percentage of the game. They went to the guy, the one guy consistently they thought would make the baskets. When you look, our defense was pretty good on everybody else except the one guy, they were smart enough to make sure they got the ball to the guy and the filter to make the shots. And we just we didn't have that guy that tonight was on fire enough to make those shots for us."

It seemed like you guys went to maybe a zone there after the kid hit those three threes, four threes, whatever it was, did you like what you saw out of that? Is that something maybe you guys continue to do because you do lack the bodies inside?

"We started working on the zone back in the fall, we have not perfected it yet. But I felt that they were doing a very good job isolating, driving, and kicking, reversing the ball, forcing us to give up on the post guy, and getting the ball around to the shooter that would make them. And it was quite effective. I thought during that period, it gave us a chance to get back at least in time to score, but after that I didn't think we were on the offensive ends where we thought we were."

Are the first half struggles, are the new rotations, is it just guys not feeling out the game very well? You are saying they are good looks, but the scoring is pretty low in the first 20 minutes in the last two games now.

"I think it is all of the above. I do think we've had different teams, different players, different rotations. I also think that there's a little bit of anxiety with first year guys being put in this situation. Their roles have changed, and everybody got to regroup physically and mentally and emotionally. So, we just, we've been in a constant state of flux during this period, but, you know, this is time of learning and growing and developing, you got to get tougher

mentally, you got to give more effort, you got to push through and make better decisions. So, I think it's all of the above, and you hit all of it. And that's where we are in terms of this particular edition of the Seminole basketball. I do think the rotations are interesting. I think the guys need to be able to play more minutes, I think that we have to adjust in some of the things that we're doing we. They have one guy that made the shots, I think later on the one guy (Jamarius) Burton, I think made a couple of shots, with the exception of Horton. That's where we are right now, we just can't get into consistency on the offensive end. I think our guys are giving decent effort, obviously, we can play maybe a little bit harder, a little bit more, what we call juice. But when you execute and can't make those shots, sometimes it has a tendency to take the enthusiasm away. I think that's what happens when you have less experience. The older guys you know, they turn it up when you face that pressure. And this is part of where we are and what we got to grow into, being more resilient. Know that when things are not going well, we turn it up on the defensive end, on the rebounding end."

How much do you have to try to keep their confidence up and keep it forward directed instead of worrying about what already has happened?

"When you're a confident person. It's hard to take this confidence away from somebody if they really have it. I felt that, from an effort standpoint, I wasn't overly disappointed in their physical effort. I think we could have blocked out better on some of those long rebounds. I thought we could have been a little more cohesive down the stretch here. We turn the ball over in some critical points. I thought we were aggressive, but we missed some layups. I think that's part of what teams go through when they regroup. I like to think that that what we'll do. We'll evaluate the film and what motivates to get us more determined. When we identify shortcomings, when we have a film session tomorrow, that will identify what our challenges are. And then we're doing exactly what we have to do mentally, emotionally, and physically to improve and be better prepared when we go play against Carolina."