

Coaches Quotes
Florida State 60, Wake Forest 68
Saturday, February 5, 2022
Donald L. Tucker Center
Tallahassee, Fla.

Wake Forest Head Coach Steve Forbes

Opening Statement

"As bad as our offense was, for a lot of the game with turnovers, I didn't think we ever let our offense dictate how we defended. I thought that was the key to the game. The flip side from a week ago, at Syracuse, we needed Alondes (Williams) and Jake (LaRavia) to play really well on the road. They were outstanding today. They were the two best players on the court. We went to them late, over, and over and over. I thought we did a good job offensively, finally executing down the stretch. Daivien (Williamson) made a big three in the corner. The five-man came out on him, I stood behind him that play, I don't know how he saw the basket. He made it, Damari Monsanto made a big shot. Damari also rebounded the ball very well. Listen, it was ugly. I don't know how else to spin that one. I'm not going to. But we were resilient. We had less turnovers and we rebounded better in the second half, which gave us the chance to win. We came here a year ago and we lost, a game that we should have won. Today, we found a way to win. And now we got 19 wins. It's not a pretty game by no means. I guess when you get in February, fellas, you just got to find a way to win. It feels a lot better on that plane, eating those cookies and drinking that milk on the way home. Yes, we had cookies and milk on the way down. First time I've ever had that on our charter plane. And it'll taste a lot better going home."

How proud were you, the way this team was able to close that game, especially in this environment continuing to be able to continually being able to quiet this crowd up whenever they got energy?

"Real proud. A lot of credit goes to Florida State, too. Obviously they got some injuries and had a big guy get injured during the game and they fought hard. They just put their head down and drove to the basket, then got a lot of offensive rebounds. Somebody told me number 30 (Harrison Prieto) is a walk-on, that right? I don't know. He played great. But I've played here before, you know before they renovated this place, back when Pat Kennedy was coaching, this place is just an incredible environment. Great crowd. And their team battled really hard through adversity, but we found a way to win. And that's what good teams do, especially on the road."

Can you walk us through what it is you had to say to the team a little bit at the half about turnovers? And then how big and how important was it for you to limit second chances after the first five to eight minutes? They did a lot of damage on the boards. But you guys' kind of put a stop to that.

"There are really no magic words. I'm big on adjustments. I'm big on trying to help my team. You know, but be quite honest with you with those, the majority of turnovers? I don't know. I didn't know what to tell. I didn't have any words of wisdom, other than if we don't fix it, and if you don't look in the mirror and be accountable, you're going to ruin a good run here a chance for win on the road. It's important in February, to separate in February to sweep a team. When's the last time we swept Florida State? I don't know. You know what I'm saying? That's all I really said, I'd already yelled a lot. I recall one time I didn't speak to them; I was so mad in the first half. When you got smart guys and mature guys, they figure it out. There's no one you can't blame in that deal, you got to look in the mirror. Me too, it's my job too. That's exactly what we talked about, last I said, this is not going to be rocket science, this is going to be turnovers and offensive rebounds. And if we control those, we will win the game. If we don't, we won't, it'll be a bad loss. A bad loss. I would have come here and told you that it was a bad loss if we lost that game, and it's not disrespect to Florida State because here we are expecting to come to Florida State and win here too, but that's how it is. We did it. We did it to their credit."

Were there any surprises defensively with the matchups of Florida State? They came out and obviously, they switch a ton, but it seemed like that was our focus exploiting who lined up and Jake had on them different points.

"We did a little bit, we purposely set some ball screens, guards to get another matchup on Alondes (Williams), not a matchup on Jake (LaRavia) to take advantage of so they can drive. But they switch, they've always switched, and they're really good pressuring. So, we tried to do our best to take advantage of that. Now they're switching. It's hard

to really move the ball a lot because they don't let you catch and so you got to make some plays off the drive. And I thought in the second half the big adjustment for us was we came up, we haven't done this much all year, we initiated the offense with flat ball screen up high, been forced to switch or force him to get behind the play. And I thought that was really important. Guys, I don't know if you guys have been doing this long? Have you ever seen a team win with 26 field goals and 26 turnovers? I mean, that's bad."

Do you now Wake Forest leads the nation and near triple doubles?

"I didn't know it. They are giving Daivien (Williamson) a hard time, I guess in the locker room. I know. Daivien made a shot, guys. I don't know how he saw the basket. I was standing behind him. I was guarding him from behind. And then he missed one wide open. He never misses free throws. And he did. But I guess that was a past that Jake would have had a triple double. I did not know that. Obviously. He was working on a quadruple down too because he had six turnovers. I think that's a testament to how good those two players are. Their mostly pretty good players. And we got some good guys around them, two really good guys around, you know, Khadim (Sy) didn't have a great day, he's been hurt. He got hurt in the Pitt game. He didn't practice on Thursday or practice yesterday. You know, he tried to make a goal today. And I gave him credit for giving a shot."

Kadim Sy got six boards for you. But there's two or three times he wasn't quite as ready for a pass as he usually is.

"No, he wasn't on balance around the basket. You know, but I'll tell you what Khadim is really good at. I mean, he can ice that ball with the best of them. He's aggressive. He gets up in there. He pokes with the ball; guards don't like that. He's had better days offensively for sure. But he's fighting, he's pretty sore. Real sore. I wasn't sure he was going to play and it's a credit to him."

Dallas Walton was a plus 18. Today you talked about how you weren't in love with the way the bigs played, but did you think Dallas had a good game offensively and on the glass?

"I've seen him (Dallas Walton) play better. That's weird, you know, here's the thing about numbers guys. I kind of go with what I look at. What I see maybe sometimes that doesn't bear out on the stats. I thought he has played better but again, team-wise, that just shows you how important is your team. And I'm glad you pointed that out because I hadn't really looked at stats starting on, I wouldn't probably bet that but again, when we made those runs, he was in there, and so credit to him. He only took one shot, he had five fouls, a steal, a block."

Wake Forest Guard Jake LaRavia

Did you feel any different the start of that second half did you make a specific adjustment with the coaches at halftime or were you just more aggressive and things were going your way?

"I just saw after the first half who was kind of struggling, to get some offense going so I had to be more aggressive come out in the second half and I also like wanted to get us going offensively so you know we started playing harder."

Just how disappointing is it to come one assist shy of a triple double Jake?

"I'm not really too worried about stats; I know I was close. But, it is disappointing at the end of the day, but we got the win, that's really all that matters to me."

What has Khadim Sy had to say to you?

"He just apologized. He kind of felt bad for missing those two threes at the end, but I told him it's all good."

What do you account for some of the offensive struggles in that first half when ball security obviously was an issue?

"We just struggled to keep the ball in our hands. There are a couple times where they either just took it from us or we just lost it, slipped through our hands. That's something we've kind of been struggling with, you know, just trying to not have fundamental turnovers. It's not really like travels or anything like that, but we're just giving it to the team. That's something that we got to work on. And we did, we definitely did better. On the second half, I know, we had 18 in the first but held it to eight in a second. So, we switched up."

Is it hard to kind of turn the page from that? I mean, you only have 15-minute half time, and you're right back out there trying to sort that out.

"It's really an individual thing. It's not really like something that coaches can tell us. It's just us, we have to be strong with the ball, we have to be more protective with the ball and have more better ball security."

As the seasons progressed in, you've obviously been very successful offensively playing in the post, on the block, have teams defended you differently, or do you feel like it's kind of been similar?

"I definitely know they try to stop me going to my right hand. I've noticed that a little bit. I noticed that they're playing my shot a lot more. Since I've been, I've been shooting the three ball better now. And they've been testing the shot fakes and whatever. So now, I can use it all."

A lot of guys give up like after one or two moves don't quite get them to finish, but you have enough patience to go through the full cycle, what makes you different in the post, because I don't see many guys that have that array of post moves.

"I've just learned ever since I've been in college that someone's going to go for something. Someone's going to go for that ESPN top 10 block or, you know, whatever. I just use that to the best of my ability. I know someone's going to end up going for some pump. if they don't, then someone else is open, because I'm always getting double teamed down there."

Seems like a big part of the game was early on, where FSU is kind of pounding the offensive glass, right? And after the first five to eight minutes, you guys' kind of mostly kept them down to one shot. What was the key to kind of shutting that opportunity off for them? What did you all do to kind of limit the second chance opportunities in Florida state after the first five to eight minutes?

"We just started, we had to hit bodies. That's something we weren't really doing in the first half. We weren't boxing our man out. We were kind of just jumping for the rebound. And you know, the other team was jumping too, and they were getting it, so we had to start hitting the other team and we ended up getting more rebounds."

Sweeping an opponent obviously had a chance last week with Syracuse, you guys just didn't get it done. What do you think this kind of accomplishes? Not only at home, but you got them on the road too.

"I think this was definitely a big win for us. Especially because it was on the road and now to sweep. So, one of the things that we're talking about in the locker room is, we're ahead of them now. So, it was a big win for us, and we got it done."