

Coaches Quotes
Florida State 89, NC State 76
Saturday, March 5, 2022
Donald L. Tucker Center
Tallahassee, Florida

NC State Head Coach Kevin Keatts

Opening Statement

"I thought our guys in the second half, we had a conversation at halftime, and I thought that three guys that were playing with so much energy were Trequavion (Smith), Jericho (Hellems), and then Jalen Gibson. We talked about at halftime wanting guys to play with a little bit more energy. We only played seven guys; Breon (Pass) has been nursing an ankle injury since the Wake Forrest game and he was not 100 percent, or even 70 percent, to go tonight. I thought in the second half we did some really good stuff. Our guys were really active and locked in. Obviously when you look back at the game, I think a couple things that hurts was we got beat in transition and gave up some easy baskets.

What is the feeling like amongst the team heading into Brooklyn next week knowing that you now will be the 15 seed in the ACC Tournament?

"I think the feeling is that it's unfortunate for our team. When you look around at all of the basketball talking heads is that our league right now is only going to get five teams into the tournament and it doesn't really matter. We would say if we were 15-5 or if we have the record we do now we would say we are 0-0 and you have to go into the tournament and have the opportunity to win the tournament. My conversation with the team at the end of the game was that we talked about the game itself but we also talked about what's next. There are going to be ten teams going to Brooklyn that must feel like they have to win the tournament to have the opportunity to go to the big dance. We have not had the best season, but this is what the tournament is all about."

What is the biggest thing that needs to change in order to get a win on Tuesday and even have any sort of confidence potentially heading into Wednesday?

"When you don't have a lot of bodies, similar to our situation when we have such a small margin for error. We have to have, if Breon (Pass) is ready to go, at least all eight guys play to their strengths and be really good. When you get to this time of year, it is about players being able to make plays and you have to have your best. In order for us to win we need our big three to be great, but we also need all of our role players to have a great game also."

I think you guys are first or second in the league in offensive rebounding how do you balance doing that at a high rate, but also not letting it impact your defense in terms of getting back in transition?

"It's a juggling act because offensively we have struggled at times and some of our best offense is off of offensive rebounding and getting the ball out to open shooters and getting a quick stick back. That being said, it also can hurt you getting back in transition and I thought you know with some teams we are going to push the ball and it doesn't hurt as much, but Florida State did a great job especially in the first half getting out on us. And so it's kind of like you have to pick your poison in that situation.

I know you haven't had a chance for you to watch this game back, but just in general how did you feel your ball movement was today offensively?

"It is a tough one. Because against these guys they switch all one through five. There are no screening angles which forces you to make a lot of one on one plays. We are never really going to have a lot of assists against a team that switches one through five because you do not have those opportunities. So I thought it was good because we moved it but our goal going into the game was to try to take advantage of some mismatches and if they come off the strong side to make the right play and I thought we made the right play sometimes and sometimes we didn't. But sometimes we got to the hole and finished like we needed too,"

Jalen Gibson has had two really productive games rebounding the basketball, have you seen some of this from him in practice and kind of evaluate where he is at right now?

"He (Jalen) shows us a lot in practice games, in practice games he is probably our best offensive rebounder and between him and ED (Ebenezer Dowuona), they flip flop a lot between who is having a better week. I thought Jalen had a good week and I thought Jalen did a good job in the game but he has always been able to do a great job especially in the offensive rebounding glass.

Wanted to ask you about Trequavion Smith specifically. He scored 30 points in a loss today but at this point now he has surpassed JJ Reddick for I believe fourth most three pointers made all time by a freshman in the ACC. Just your thoughts on the season that he has had and where this season kind of ranked in terms of where you have coached freshmen in the past?

"That is a lot to digest. He has had an outstanding year and I would be lying to you if I told you that I expected him to have this kind of year but he has been special. I have said it all along and I know you guys have a vote but if it was not for Paolo Banchemo, he would be maybe freshman of the year and then as a possibility that with as good as he's played he could be on one of the all conference teams. When you go over that list and you see guys like JJ Reddick, who probably played 10 more games than him, that just tells you how special he is and I do not want to take away from his year because of the year that we have had. But, he has been great, I could not have asked for anything else, he is a competitor he works hard every day. He weighs 160 pounds and he is fearless, so I am glad he is on my team and he is someone that you can continue to build around."

Freshman Terquavion Smith

At this point, you have now moved to third all time in ACC freshman history in terms of three pointers. But it comes in another game like this. How proud are you in what you have accomplished but how much do you feel like this team still needs to continue move forward with the tournament in Brooklyn being next week?

"Honestly, I am proud of myself but that is the last thing I am looking at for real. That record really doesn't affect me but I am proud of myself. Honestly, I am just worried about the team and hoping that we can come through and push together in the tournament."

Heading into Brooklyn next week, what is the feeling like for this team in the locker room and how much do you guys feel like you can potentially get something going next week?

"This time you know anything can happen possibly. It is never over, there is always something unexpected happening around this time in college basketball, so I feel like we have a good chance. Everybody is starting 0-0 in our eyes."

What do you think was the biggest reason for the loss today?

"I would have to say we gave up a lot of transition points. We know it is something we have talked about heavy in film and something that we stressed to go over every day leading up to this game so I think we gave up at least 20+ transition points so that was probably one of the main things."

Do you think that was based on defense not getting back, do you think it was maybe some poor shot selection, what do you think attributed to some of those flaws in transition?

"I feel like our balance when we take shots, sometimes our balance is messed up on the court so people crash, some people try to get the ball and get a quick steal, but we were not just getting back right after the shot we were crashing or trying to get an early steal off the inbound."