

Coaches Quotes
Florida State vs. Purdue
Wednesday, November 30, 2022
Donald L. Tucker Center
Tallahassee, Florida State University

Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton

Opening Statement

"I think we showed that we're growing up. We showed that we will adjust mentally and emotionally to this level of play that we have to consistently have night in and night out in order for us to be successful. This team has been somewhat challenging, in a lot of ways. Probably one of the more inexperienced teams we've have. Not having the veterans that we've been accustomed to having on this team has been hard to adjust to. I think that tonight, I think they took a step in the right direction. We have a long ways to go. We had some spurts the other night where I thought that we had three possessions offensively, we took some quick shots, but we wanted Cam Corhen to take those threes, we think he's going to be a really, really good shooter. But it takes time, some time for freshmen to gain that confidence. We only had turned the ball over eight times for the game, but the turnovers that we made were in critical times that I thought really, really put us in a tough spot. One thing that's good is that we play in high level competition from here on out. So we got to be at our very, very best. Purdue's a really good basketball team. We had a hard time stopping the big fella (Zach Edey) inside. We had no intentions of letting him catch the ball that deep in there and shooting those jump hooks, but he's a handful to keep the ball away from him. They do a very good job getting the ball to him. They are a much better shooting team than what they showed tonight, but I thought our guys did a very good job of getting to them. I think our guys showing that a little bit of progress. Now we got to manage our body and manage our energy. And we mentally and emotionally we got to get back in there and go on the road to play I think the number three team in the country. So we need that type of challenge though, to help us find ourselves."

What did you learn from your team tonight, if anything? Did they come out with a more competitive spirit or what was the difference?

"We sustained our effort for long periods of time. And even though Chandler (Jackson) has been in seven practices and De'Ante (Green) has been in about five the entire year, also the injuries that they just got cleared from you know, their minutes were valuable to us. They were able to give us a couple of minutes here, a couple minutes there, so that we could give those guys a break. We tried to sub them around the timeouts and give out a more experienced players - some opportunity to get a breather here and there. I thought that was very valuable to us, especially in the first half when the game was going back and forth and it was a very competitive game. So just having them for a couple of minutes spurts I thought was valuable. Jalen Warley didn't score tonight. I think he missed five shots, but I thought his floor leadership was pretty good and I thought his defense was excellent. And they put us in a position where we had a chance. But I did learn the fact that we still are growing. We've got a ways to go; we've got to find ways to keep growing mentally and emotionally. We didn't get a whole lot better over the weekend. I think we're growing mentally and emotionally. We understand the level of energy to play with and how we have to play to each other, how we have to create for each other, sharing the ball, sharing playing time; I thought we showed some progress in those areas tonight."

How do you feel like you guys can take this effort and continue it going forward?

"You guys ask a lot of questions from a philosophical standpoint, the bottom line is we got to sustain it. And I sure hope we haven't forgot how to coach in a year's time. I think that this is part of who we are. We, we think we have some good pieces, but it's got to grow and it's got to mature. And, you know, we got freshmen in positions where they, how they play makes a difference in whether we will be successful or not. We have second year guys that are carrying the mail that we have not had that level of stress on. We've always had third and fourth year guys, setting the table and the first and second year, guys, you know, being a supportive player with the exception of some of the guys that were only here for one, two years. But that's part of the growth of our program. And we've set a standard that's high, a standard we've got to live up to it. And we challenge them every day, a lot of maturing and adjusting to the level that they're playing at. We've got guys trying to get to a place where they never have been. It's

challenging to learn how to get there, we got to keep pushing them, keep holding them accountable. And I think you'll see continued progress as we move through the rest of the season."

How can this game, as effective, as efficient as it was for Matthew Cleveland be something to build off of him?

"Matthew, he's a sophomore, and he's still learning and growing. In this day and time, everyone expects it to be instant, you know, and looking for instant gratification. The level that we're competing at, that is just not quite the way that it is, especially when you're growing like we are. Matthew settled in, we've been challenging him to play with confidence. Tonight the game slowed down for him a little bit. He played within himself. He got into the dots and around the free throw line. That's where he's most effective. And we told him before the game, if you have open uncontested threes, shoot them, and he made one in a critical part of the game. I think a lot of that is still just growing up and maturing. You know, this is who we are and you'll see us get better and better as we move through the remainder of the year. As our guys get more and more experience, and understand how to play to each other and with each other and for each other, I think you'll see us keep growing as long as our effort is what it was tonight, and then we continue to improve on it."

As challenging as their offense can be to defend, overall did you like how you guys defended? And did you think you made it pretty tough on them?

"When you look at the shooting percentages and what they're capable of doing, I've got to say that we did a pretty good job, except on the big fella and everyone's had trouble with him. He's (Zach Edey) a different kind of guy. I thought we could have done a much better job on him. He had to fight and earn what he got, so I was pleased with that. That's what elite players will do, and I have to put him in that elite category. You know, that's who he is. That made it easier for the other guys to be effective because you had to give him so much attention that sometimes you gave some driving lines up because you couldn't afford the help off the big guy. I thought their guys were extremely clever. I thought they played with a lot of poise. I thought we put a really good defensive effort on them and they maintained their poise for the most part. I thought that was the biggest key in the game. When we were wrapped up by defense, I thought the challenge that we didn't live up to was the fact that they got by us on some dribble drives and that kind of broke our back. We were guarding their sets, guarding their offense, and we were very well prepared for that, but it was just their quickness and speed and the confidence for those guy that just blow by and get in there and then setting and not panicking and make a layup, find some people, have kick outs. That's part of who they are and that's why they are ranked as high as they are."