

Turpin comes through for 'Noles

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With power forward Terrance Shannon sidelined by a neck injury, Florida State junior Kiel Turpin hoped to step up Thursday night against visiting Clemson.

It took a little longer than he might have hoped, but Turpin did that and more – recording career highs in points and blocked shots -- in helping the Seminoles pull off a stunning 60-57 victory against the Tigers.

“Kiel is solid in a lot of ways,” FSU coach Leonard Hamilton said. “He just is one of the least experienced guys on our team. This is the most number of minutes he’s played, and obviously he stepped up and delivered.”

It didn’t look good early – for Turpin or the Seminoles.

The junior college transfer went to the bench with two early fouls and played only four minutes in the first half.

At halftime, his stat line featured mostly zeroes -- no points or rebounds. Not even a shot attempted.

With Shannon sidelined and Turpin plagued by foul trouble, FSU’s freshman post players – centers Boris Bojanovsky and Michael Ojo – has to man the middle for most of the half. Those two combined for three points and three rebounds in 17 minutes, and the Seminoles trailed by eight points at halftime.

But after a heart-to-heart with the injured Shannon, Turpin turned it up in the second half.

“After my two fouls, Terrance pulled me aside and was like, ‘You’ve got to step up,’” Turpin said.

“We can’t just have Bo and Ojo going at them. We need all three of you guys doing something productive. And I think that kind of got me going in the second half.”

In the second half, Turpin hit 4 of 8 shots from the field and 8 of 9 from the free-throw line.

He finished with a career-high 16 points, grabbed four rebounds and blocked a career-high four shots.

He played 17 minutes in the second half to finish with a career-high 21 for the game.

And during one stretch of nearly 10 minutes, Turpin almost single-handedly kept the Seminoles in the game, scoring 13 of FSU’s 16 points during that stretch.

“He played very well,” Clemson coach Brad Brownell said.

“Made big free throws. A couple of nice baskets when they needed them. He’s gonna be a good player.”

Perhaps most surprising about Turpin's performance was his shooting at the foul line. The 7-foot, 225-pounder came into the game shooting just 58.3 percent from the line. He had recorded only 24 attempts in 17 games, making 14.

But he made all but one of his nine attempts against the Tigers. The junior credited the improvement to recent work he has put in with associate head coach Stan Jones.

"At the beginning of the year, I wasn't making as many as I should, and we completely remade my shot," Turpin said. "Obviously that's helping me a lot."