



## **Coaches Quotes**

**No. 24 Florida State 81, No. 12 North Carolina 80**

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**Donald L. Tucker Center**

**Tallahassee, Florida**

## **Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton**

### **Opening Statement**

"I thought we grew up a little. We got the stops and the big rebounds and executed on the offensive end and the defensive end at the same time. It was very difficult to pull this out so I'm really pleased with the guys. We had a lot of guys played well on the offensive side. I think we did a strong job keeping them off the boards. Hopefully when we get Christ (Koumadje) back, it'll help us a little bit on the boards. But I thought we got the timely rebounds that we had to have in the critical portions of the game. I thought it made a big difference."

### **On Coach Ham's feelings towards the second half comeback**

"There's no doubt that we called timeout early and our guys looked at each other and called each other and held each other accountable. Their body language changed and that's what you like to see from a team as young as ours. You feel like they're the defining moments where the games on the line and if you're going to win the game you have to step up. I thought we executed much better on the offensive end. I thought the kids responded well. I thought that really made a difference."

### **On necessity for a young team to lose its composure and come back to get over a hump?**

"In the Duke game, the score was 93-93 and I thought the last three touches we didn't execute very well. Tonight, I think we showed what we learned in the Duke game. Because when the games on the line, we move the ball. I thought we drove the ball to the basket and gave ourselves a chance to get to the foul line and get kick-outs and knock down some jumpers. We got to the rim and we also got some fouls. So that's what you do when you have a game on the line. You try to put the team in a situation where you move the ball, you can get a layout."

### **On importance of CJ Walker's performance**

"No doubt about that. CJ is a warrior. We all knew that he played with a little bit of a chip on his shoulder. But he represents the way we like for our guys to play. A good, clean, hard-nosed tough basketball. I think Phil's been playing that way and for the most part I think the entire team during a period there during the second half when the game's on the line. I thought they played with CJ's tenacity."

**On how Coach Ham feels (physically)**

"I feel 'mission accomplished'. We came away with a victory, that's the most important thing. The last 36 hours have been a little tough on me but I've had tougher things that I've had to overcome. Maybe not quite as painful, but tough.

**On Coach Ham's possibility of coming to game**

"Under no circumstances was I not going to be here. That was not going to happen. Sometimes, kidney stones are not very enjoyable. They can bring some pain but that's okay. Just makes the pain worth it."

**On how to stay this physically and mentally sharp**

"I thought that Carolina showed that they had a championship mentality. They were down, they came back, they gave the ball to their leader, he stepped up and made many plays. That's championship focus, saying 'we are the champions, and we want to make sure that we stake our place. We challenged our guys. We told them, they stepped up and played like champions'. Now it's our time to step up and play like champions. I'll say this, we are in a league where every night you go out and play and you're playing against a top-ranked opponent. They might not be nationally ranked in the top 25, but I'll guarantee you they'll be just as good as a lot of other teams that are in the top 25. And so you have to put yourself in a frame of mind where it doesn't really matter who you play. If you start getting caught up in, 'they're ranked 14<sup>th</sup>', 'they're ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>', and this team is not ranked so we don't have to concern ourselves with them. So we try to teach our kids that let's enjoy this one. But it's not as much about who we're playing, it's about how we prepare ourselves and how close we come to playing up to our potential. And that's what we're concentrating on and that's not easy. That's the championship type of mindset that we're trying to develop. And I think we made a significant amount of progress from a coaching standpoint. But in order for us to become that consistent threat and compete against nationally ranked team's night-in and night-out. We got to have that Seminole culture."

**On being on holiday and not having school**

"Had you not mentioned that, I would not have even thought about that because we have to play. The games will be played regardless of the holiday or whether it's 7 o'clock in the morning. It doesn't really matter. Worry about the things you can control. And that's the mindset you have to participate with. Our guys are growing up and moving in that direction, but we're not there yet. I think we're moving in the direction in the frame of mind that we like to see."

**On importance of making it to 500 within conference play**

"It doesn't really matter if you're 0-1 or 0-2. You play 18 in a season. You got to make sure that number is right at the end of the season. We'd love to win them all but if you lose them you still have to find a way to come back and overcome it. And so what we're trying to do is not get caught up in anything other than the preparation of the next game. And our guys are maturing a little bit. They're holding each other accountable and I saw some growth tonight when the games on the line."

**On improvements going into ACC play**

“We need to become a better rebounding team. We’ve had our hat handed to us two games in a row, but not keeping people off the offensive boards. Sometimes that’s who we are, we play small. That’s the area of our game that we have to do a little better at. I still think we can execute better on the offensive end, even though we scored 51 points at the half and we shot a pretty good percentage I think we still have a lot of room for improvement in that area.

**On making defensive rebounds in the end**

“I think during that period our guys grew up. Saying, ‘we have to go get these rebounds. We got to jump a little harder. We have to be a little bit more aggressive. I think during that period our guys grew up. Saying “we have to go get these rebounds. We got to jump a little harder. We have to be a little bit more aggressive. We got to tie the loose balls up. We got to contest the shots.’ I thought that Trent’s defense, I thought, was very good there in the latter stages of the game. But they all had their moments defensively that we contested the shots. We had a hard time containing Joel Berry. He’s a great player. He does that night-in, night-out. But I think we did a pretty good job with the rest of the guys.”