

NO. 15/15 FLORIDA STATE SEMINOLES (4-1 OVERALL, 1-0 ACC)
VS.

GARDNER-WEBB RUNNIN' BULLDOGS (1-4 OVERALL, 0-0 BIG SOUTH)
MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2020; 7:00 P.M.

DONALD L. TUCKER CENTER (2,800)
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

LEARFIELD IMG RADIO NETWORK (GENE DECKERHOFF, ADRIAN CRAWFORD)
FOX SPORTS SOUTH (BOB RATHBUN, MIKE GMINSKI)

2020-21 Florida State Schedule

D2	North Florida	W, 86-58
D9	1 Indiana	W, 69-67 (OT)
D12	Florida	W, 83-71
D15	* Georgia Tech	W, 74-61
D19	UCF	L, 74-86
D21	Gardner-Webb	7:00 p.m.
D29	* at Clemson	7:00 p.m.
J2	* Duke	6/8:00 p.m.
J6	* at Syracuse	7:00 p.m.
J9	* at Pittsburgh	2:00 p.m.
J13	* NC State	7:00 p.m.
J16	* North Carolina	12 Noon
J18	* at Louisville	7:00 p.m.
J23	* Clemson	3:00 p.m.
J27	* Miami	6:00 p.m.
J30	* at Georgia Tech	4:00 p.m.
F2	* at Boston College	9:00 p.m.
F9	* at Virginia Tech	8:30 p.m.
F13	* Wake Forest	12 Noon
F15	* Virginia	7:00 p.m.
F20	* Virginia Tech	12 Noon
F24	* at Miami	8:30 p.m.
F27	* at North Carolina	4:00 p.m.
M3	* Boston College	9:00 p.m.
M9-13	2 at ACC Tournament	TBD

*ACC Game. 1 ACC/Big Ten Challenge at Tallahassee, Fla.; 2 ACC Tournament Greensboro Coliseum, Greensboro, N.C.

2019-20 ACC Standings

Team	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Florida State	16	4	.800	26	5	.839
Virginia	15	5	.750	23	7	.767
Louisville	15	5	.750	24	7	.774
Duke	15	5	.750	25	6	.806
Georgia Tech	10	9	.500	17	14	.548
NC State	10	10	.500	19	12	.613
Syracuse	10	10	.500	17	14	.548
Notre Dame	10	10	.474	18	12	.600
Clemson	9	11	.450	15	15	.500
Miami	7	13	.350	15	15	.500
Boston College	7	13	.368	13	18	.419
Virginia Tech	7	13	.368	16	15	.516
Wake Forest	6	14	.316	13	17	.433
Pittsburgh	6	14	.300	15	16	.484
N. Carolina	6	14	.300	13	18	.419

Leonard Hamilton's Career Record

	W	L	Pct.	Years
Career	564	432	.566	1987-Pr.
at Okla. State	56	63	.471	1987-90
at Miami	144	147	.495	1991-00
at Florida State	364	222	.621	2002-Pr.

ACC Operation Basketball Predicted Order of Finish

1. Virginia	9. Georgia Tech
2. Duke	10. Clemson
3. FLORIDA STATE	11. Virginia Tech
4. North Carolina	12. Notre Dame
5. Louisville	13. Pittsburgh
6. Syracuse	14. Boston College
7. Miami	15. Wake Forest
8. NC State	

"You (Leonard Hamilton) have had a Hall of Fame career. You have consistently won at a high, high level turning this program (Florida State) into what should be a regular in the top-25, the top-10 (and) ACC Champs multiple times. You've done a masterful job."

Andy Katz
NCAA.com

SEMINOLES CLOSE OUT NON-CONFERENCE SCHEDULE AGAINST GARDNER-WEBB

Florida State, which has won four of its first five games of the 2020-21 season, plays host to Gardner-Webb on Monday, December 21, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at the Donald L. Tucker Center. The Seminoles are looking to win their fifth non-conference home game of the season before beginning a stretch of 19 consecutive ACC games to close out the regular season. Florida State defeated Georgia Tech by a 74-61 margin on December 15 to earn its first ACC victory of the season. Following Monday's game against Gardner-Webb, the Seminoles travel to play at Clemson in their first road game of the season on Tuesday, December 29, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

GARDNER WEBB VS. FLORIDA STATE – CONNECTIONS

Florida State plays host to Gardner Webb marking just the second time in school history the two teams will play each other in men's basketball. The Seminoles took a 78-53 victory in over the Runnin' Bulldogs on November 15, 2010 in Tallahassee. Gardner Webb is coached by Tim Craft who is in his eighth season as the Runnin' Bulldogs Head Coach. Craft was born in Tallahassee, Fla., and attended North Florida Christian and Florida High School. As a graduate of Florida High School in Tallahassee, his graduation ceremonies were in the Ruby Diamond Auditorium on the Florida State campus. Craft grew up on the same street as Seminole baseball great Link Jarrett and Chicago Cub Manager David Ross. Jeremy Luther, also a Tallahassee native, is in his eighth season on the staff at Gardner Webb. In his third season as the Runnin' Bulldogs Associate Head Coach, Luther is a graduate of North Florida Christian High School in Tallahassee.

FLORIDA STATE HAS WON NEARLY 95 PERCENT OF ITS HOME GAMES SINCE FEBRUARY 27, 2015

Florida State is 69-4 (.945 winning percentage) in its last 73 home games since the tail end of the 2015-16 season. The Seminoles enter Monday's game against Gardner-Webb having won .945 percent of their games (69-3) and .925 percent of their ACC games (37-3) at home since the tail end of the 2015-16 season. Florida State's streak began with a 77-56 win over No. 23 Notre Dame on February 27, 2015. The Seminoles are 4-1 at home this season, were 16-0 at home last season (including 10-0 in ACC play), were 15-1 at home (including 8-1 in the ACC) during the 2018-19 season and were 18-0 at home (including 9-0 in the ACC) in the 2016-17 season.

FLORIDA STATE SINCE THE START OF THE 2018-19 SEASON

Florida State is 59-14 (.808 winning percentage) since the start of the 2018-19 season. The Seminoles finished 29-8 in 2018-19, 26-5 in 2019-20 and are 4-1 this season. Since defeating Clemson on December 8, 2019, the Seminoles have won nearly 85 percent of their games with a record of 22-4 (.846 winning percentage).

HAMILTON AMONG ALL-TIME GREATEST COACHES IN ACC

Florida State Head Coach Leonard Hamilton enters Monday's game against Gardner-Webb as the fifth winningest coach in ACC history with 364 career wins at Florida State. Hamilton became only the sixth coach in the illustrious history of the nation's best basketball conference to win 350 career games with the Seminoles' victory over Miami on January 18, 2020.

Hamilton In ACC History

Rank	Coach, School	Career Wins
1.	Mike Krzyzewski, Duke	1,087
2.	Dean Smith, North Carolina	879
3.	Roy Williams, North Carolina	471
4.	Gary Williams, Maryland	461
5.	Leonard Hamilton, Florida State	364

LOOK FOR FLORIDA STATE TO...

...Defeat Gardner-Webb and win its fifth consecutive home game against a team from the state of North Carolina. The Seminoles earned victories at the Donald L. Tucker Center against North Carolina and Western Carolina during the 2019-20 season and against NC State and Wake Forest in the final three weeks of the 2018-19 season; ...Defeat Gardner Webb and gain the 1,250th win in program history. The Seminoles' first ever win came on December 10, 1947 – a 39-36 win over Spring Hill College – in a game played at the old West Gymnasium on the Florida State campus.

Florida State Basketball / National Polls

ASSOCIATED PRESS POLL

Rk.	Team	20-21 Rec.
1.	Gonzaga (54)	3-0
2.	Baylor (7)	4-0
3.	Iowa (1)	6-0
4.	Michigan State	6-0
5.	Kansas	6-1
6.	Houston	4-0
7.	Villanova	5-1
8.	West Virginia	6-1
9.	Creighton	4-1
10.	Tennessee	2-0
11.	Texas	5-1
12.	Wisconsin	4-1
13.	Illinois	4-2
14.	Texas Tech	6-1
15.	FLORIDA STATE	3-0
16.	Missouri	5-0
17.	Virginia	3-1
18.	San Diego State	5-0
19.	Rutgers	4-0
20.	Ohio State	5-0
21.	Duke	2-2
22.	North Carolina	4-2
23.	Louisville	4-0
24.	Clemson	5-0
25.	Michigan	6-0

USA TODAY POLL

Rk.	Team	Points
1.	Gonzaga (24)	790
2.	Baylor (6)	772
3.	Iowa (2)	729
4.	Michigan State	679
5.	Kansas	618
6.	Villanova	606
7.	West Virginia	562
8.	Houston	546
9.	Creighton	537
10.	Tennessee	434
11.	Texas	422
12.	Wisconsin	420
13.	Illinois	388
14.	Texas Tech	356
15.	FLORIDA STATE	334
16.	Virginia	243
17.	Rutgers	231
18.	Missouri	221
19.	Ohio State	215
20.	San Diego State	209
21.	North Carolina	195
22.	Louisville	168
23.	Duke	220
24.	Michigan	101
25.	Richmond	73

Florida State's 2020-21 Poll History

Week	AP	Coaches
Preseason	21	18
Week 1	22	NP
Week 2	20	21
Week 3	15	15

Which is Your Favorite NBA Team

Balsa Koprivica	Dallas Mavericks
Anthony Polite	Miami Heat
Sardaar Calhoun	Washington Wizards
M.J. Walker	Wherever LeBron is
RaiQuan Gray	Wherever LeBron is
Tanor Ngom	Toronto Raptors
Malik Osborne	Chicago Bulls
Mike Gminski	New Jersey Nets
Bob Rathbun	Atlanta Hawks

WALKER NAMED TO JERRY WEST TOP SHOOTING GUARD WATCH LIST

M.J. Walker, who enters Monday's game against Gardner-Webb as Florida State's leading scorer with a career-high 17.8 points per game scoring average, is on the prestigious Jerry West Award Watch List by the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. The award is presented annually to the top shooting guard in college basketball. Walker is one of 20 players – and one of only two from the Atlantic Coast Conference – who will vie for the award. For Walker, it's the second time in his career that he has been named to the Jerry West Award Watch List. He also began his freshman season of 2018 as a candidate for the award.

BARNES NAMED TO BOB COUSY TOP POINT GUARD WATCH LIST

Scottie Barnes, who was named the ACC Freshman of the Week for his performances in victories over Indiana and Florida, is one of 20 candidates for the prestigious Bob Cousy Award which is presented annually to the nation's top collegiate point guard by the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. Barnes is one of only two players from the ACC and is one of only three freshmen in the nation named as preseason candidates for the award. Florida State has been well represented on the Cousy Award Watch List under Hamilton and is staff. Toney Douglas (2009), Xavier Rathan-Mayes (2016) and most recently Trent Forrest (2020) were also candidates for the award.

BARNES NAMED TO NAISMITH AND WOODEN AWARD WATCH LISTS

Scottie Barnes, who is the Seminoles' second-leading scorer with an 11.6 points per game scoring average, is on the watch lists for the 2021 Naismith Trophy and 2021 John R. Wooden Award. The Naismith Trophy has been awarded to the top college basketball player in the nation since 1969. Barnes is one of eight players from the ACC and one of nine freshmen from around the nation on the watch list to begin the 2020-21 season. He is one of just two freshman from the ACC and one of only seven freshman in the nation to have been named to the Wooden Award Watch list.

FLORIDA STATE RANKS AS THE NATION'S FOURTH TALLEST TEAM

With two Seminoles playing at a height of 7-0 or better (Balsa Koprivica and Tanor Ngom) and a third at 6-11 (Quincy Ballard), Florida State is one of the top five tallest teams (by average height in inches) in Division I Basketball for the 2020-21 season. The Seminoles' run of having at least one player who is 7-0 or taller is now at 14 consecutive seasons and dates to the 2007-08 season when Solomon Alabi joined the team as a freshman.

NCAA Division I Tallest Team (By Average Height In Inches)

Rank	Team	Average Height
1.	Utah State	79.31
2.	Stanford	79.06
3.	Boise State	78.86
4.	Florida State	78.57
	Texas	78.57
6.	UCF	78.44
7.	Siena	78.35
8.	Syracuse	78.10
9.	Saint Mary's	78.08
10.	Missouri	78.00

FLORIDA STATE LEADS THE ACC IN 3-POINT FIELD GOAL PERCENTAGE

Florida State, which made a season-high 10 3-point field goals against UCF, enters Monday's game against Gardner-Webb as the ACC leaders with a .410 team 3-point field goal shooting percentage. The Seminoles have made 34 3-point fields goals in the last four games – average of 8.5 made from long range per game. The Seminoles have shot at least .400 percent from the bonusphere in each of the last four games after shooting .292 from beyond the arc in its season opening victory over North Florida.

Seminoles A Good Shooting Team From The Bonusphere

Opponent	3FGM	3FGA	Pct.	Notes
Indiana	8	20	.400	M.J. Walker and Anthony Polite with 2 3FGM vs. Hoosiers
Florida	8	16	.500	Anthony Polite with team-leading 3 3FGM vs. Gators
Georgia Tech	8	17	.471	Wyatt Wilkes with team-leading 3 3FGM vs. Yellow Jackets
UCF	<u>10</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>.435</u>	<u>M.J. Walker with a team-leading 4 3FGM vs. Knights</u>
Totals	34	70	.486	ACC leaders from beyond the arc entering Monday's game

INDIVIDUAL SEMINOLES FROM THE 3-POINT LINE

Led by senior M.J. Walker (12 3FGM) and redshirt junior Anthony Polite (11 3FGM) a total of eight Seminoles have made at least one 3-point field goal and five Seminoles (Polite, .550; Walker, .500; Nathanael Jack, .500, Sardaar Calhoun, .444; and RaiQuan Gray, 429 are all shooting 42 percent or better from the 3-point line through the first five games of the season.

FLORIDA STATE FROM THE FIELD

Florida State is shooting .500 from the field (51 of 102) in its last two games and is ranked in the top five in the ACC for team field goal shooting percentage (.454). The Seminoles shot a season-high .529 from the field (27 of 51) in its 74-61 win over Georgia Tech in winning its ACC season opener.

Seminoles Shooting Well From the Field

Games	FGM	FGA	Pct.	Notes
Last 2	51	102	.500	Shot a season-high .529 from the field in victory over Ga. Tech
First 3	<u>83</u>	<u>193</u>	<u>.430</u>	<u>Shot .481 in win over Florida in Tallahassee</u>
Improvement			+.070	Seminoles averaging 25.5 FGM in last two games

SEMINOLES ASSIST:TURNOVER AND BASKET RATIO

Florida State has a positive assist:turnover ratio (1.2:1), has totaled more assists than turnovers in three of their first five games and has been credited with an assist on more than half of their field goals made in the first five games of the season (.544).

**Florida State Basketball
Upcoming Milestones**

Leonard Hamilton
Victories as an ACC Coach
364 (Career at Florida State)
+99 (Needs)
463

To become the 4th Winningest Coach in ACC History (all victories) (surpassing Gary Williams of Maryland)

Leonard Hamilton
ACC Victories at Florida State
(Regular Season + ACC Tourn.)
171 (career at Florida State)
+40 (needs)
211

To become the 4th Winningest Coach in ACC History (ACC games) – surpassing Gary Williams of Maryland

Leonard Hamilton
Wins vs. AP No. 1 In Career
4 (career at Florida State)
+4 (needs)
8

To move into a tie for first place in college basketball history with Roy Williams for all-time wins vs. the nation's No. 1 ranked team

Florida State
All-Time Victories
1249 (current)
+1 (needs)
1,250

Florida State enters the 2020-21 season with an all-time record of 1,249-860 for a winning percentage of .592.

M.J. Walker
Career Points Scores
873 (career at Florida State)
+127 (needs)
1,000

To become the 49th player in school history to score 1,000 or more career points

M.J. Walker
Career 3-Point Field Goals Made
141 (career at Florida State)
+2 (needs)
143

To move into 11th place in school history with 142 career 3-point field goals made – surpassing P.J. Savoy (2017-19)

M.J. Walker
Career 3-Point Field Goals Made
141 (career at Florida State)
+9 (needs)
150

To become the 10th player in school history with 150 or more career 3-point field goals made

M.J. Walker
Career 3-Point Field Goals Attempted
399 (career at Florida State)
+1 (needs)
400

To become the 12th player in school history with 400 or more career 3-point shots attempted.

STARTING LINEUP FOR FLORIDA STATE...

F #1 RaiQuan Gray (8.6 ppg, 6.2 rpg; Tied for team lead in steals entering Monday's game)
C #5 Balsa Koprivica (9.4 ppg, 5.0 rpg; Tied for team lead in blocked shots entering Monday's game)
G #2 Anthony Polite (10.8 ppg, 4.6 rpg; Shooting .550 from 3PT entering Monday's game vs. Gardner-Webb)
G #4 Scottie Barnes (11.6 ppg, 4.0 apg; Team-leading 20 assists entering Monday's game vs. Gardner-Webb)
G #23 M.J. Walker (17.8 ppg, 2.8 rpg; Shooting .500 from 3FG entering Monday's game vs. Gardner-Webb)

...AND TOP RESERVES

G #0 RayQuan Evans (3.0 ppg, 1.3 apg; Averaging career-high 15.6 MPG entering Monday's game)
F #10 Malik Osborne (3.0 ppg, 4.0 rpg; Perfect 4 of 4 from the free throw line entering Monday's game)
G #31 Wyatt Wilkes (4.4 ppg, 1.8 rpg; Averaging career-high 4.4 ppg entering Monday's game)
C #15 Quincy Ballard (1.2 ppg, 0.4 rpg; Perfect 3 of 3 field goal shooting entering Monday's game)
G #24 Sardaar Calhoun (4.0 ppg, 1.0 rpg; Perfect 2 of 2 from the free throw line entering Monday's game)
G #11 Nathanael Jack (4.0 ppg, 0.3 apg; Shooting .500 from the 3-point line entering Monday's game)
C #34 Tanor Ngom (2.3 ppg, 1.0 rpg; Shooting .600 from the field entering Monday's game)

POSSIBLE STARTING LINEUP FOR GARDNER WEBB

F #14 Kareem Reid (6.5 ppg, 4.5 rpg; 11 pts and 6 rebs vs. Western Kentucky, December 10, 2020)
F #24 Ludovic Duféal (3.3 ppg, 6.0 rpg; 11 pts and 7 rebs vs. VMI. December 18, 2020)
F #0 Lance Terry (11.0 ppg, 2.5 rpg; 15 pts and 4 rebs vs. Western Kentucky, December 10, 2020)
G #2 Jaheam Cornwall (14.5 ppg, 3.3 apg; 15 pts and 6 rebs vs. Western Kentucky, December 10, 2020)
G #3 Jacob Falko (10.3 ppg, 3.0 rpg; 19 pts and 4 asts vs. Western Kentucky, December 10, 2020)

FLORIDA STATE VS. GARDNER WEBB -- A SERIES HISTORY

The Series: Florida State leads, 1-0
First Game: November 15, 2010; Florida State 78, Gardner-Webb 53
Last Game: November 15, 2010; Florida State 78, Gardner-Webb 53
Last Florida State Win: November 15, 2010; Florida State 78, Gardner-Webb 53
Last Gardner Webb Win: None
Last Florida State Win in Tallahassee: November 15, 2010; Florida State 78, Gardner-Webb 53
Last Gardner Webb Win in Tallahassee: None
Current Streak: Florida State has won 1
Current Streak in Tallahassee: Florida State has won 1
Leonard Hamilton vs. Gardner Webb: 1-0 (at Florida State)

FLORIDA STATE VS. GARDNER-WEBB -- THE LAST GAME

Nov 15, 2010
at Florida State 78
Gardner Webb 53

FLORIDA STATE VS. GARDNER-WEBB -- THE LAST GAME

Chris Singleton scored a career-high 30 points and Deividus Dulkys added 12 points as Florida State defeated Gardner-Webb 78-53 on November 15, 2010 at the Donald L. Tucker Center. Singleton shot 10 of 11 from the floor and added 12 rebounds. Singleton, a junior forward, scored 15 of the Seminoles' first 25 points. Singleton had a career scoring night just two days after he recorded a triple-double against UNC Greensboro earlier that week. His triple-double -- 22 points, 11 rebounds and 10 steals -- was just the third in FSU history. Florida State outrebounded Gardner-Webb 40-28. The Seminoles shot 49.1 percent from the field (26 of 53) and hit 7 of 15 3-pointers (46.7 percent). Jonathan Moore had 21 points -- knocking down 5 of 8 3-point shots -- and Laron Buggs added 11 points for Gardner-Webb, which shot just 35.2 percent from the floor (19 of 54). The Bulldogs had 18 turnovers and nine assists.

TONIGHT'S OFFICIALS

Tonight's referee is Bill Covington, Jr., and the umpires are Raymie Styons and Tim Comer

2020-21 FLORIDA STATE ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	Hometown
0	RayQuan Evans	G	6-4	210	Sr.	Billings, Mont./North Idaho College
1	RaiQuan Gray	F	6-8	260	RJr.	Ft. Lauderdale, Fla./Dillard
2	Anthony Polite	G	6-6	215	RJr.	Lugano, Switzerland/St. Andrews Christian School (Fla.)
4	Scottie Barnes	G/F	6-9	227	Fr.	West Palm Beach, Fla./Montverde Academy (Fla.)
5	Balsa Koprivica	C	7-1	240	So.	Belgrade, Serbia/Montverde Academy
10	Malik Osborne	F	6-9	225	RJr.	Matteson. Ill./Bosco Institute/Rice
11	Nathanael Jack	G	6-5	195	Sr.	Mississauga, Ontario, Canada/Eastern Florida State
12	Justin Lindner	G	6-1	180	RSr.	Memphis, Tenn./Christian Brothers
15	Quincy Ballard	C	6-11	240	Fr.	Syracuse, N.Y./Quality Education Academy (N.C.)
20	Travis Light	G	6-6	190	RSr.	Vienna, Va./IMG Academy
23	M.J. Walker	G/F	6-5	213	Sr.	Riverdale, Ga./Jonesboro
24	Sardaar Calhoun	G	6-6	220	Jr.	Tappahannock, Va./Missouri University West Plains
30	Harrison Prieto	F	6-8	230	RSr.	Mandeville, La./St. Paul's School
31	Wyatt Wilkes	F	6-8	220	RJr.	Orlando, Fla./Winter Park
33	Will Miles	G	6-6	220	RSr.	Orlando, Fla./Trinity Prep
34	Tanor Ngom	C	7-2	236	Sr.	Dakar, Senegal/Ryerson University (Canada)
40	Isaac Spainhour	G	6-3	180	Fr.	King, N.C./West Stokes
42	Cleveland Yates	G	6-3	200	So.	Memphis, Tenn./Briarcrest Christian School
44	Max Thorpe	G	6-3	160	Fr.	Clearwater, Fla./Clearwater Countryside

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE: RayQuan Evans (RAY-Qwan); RaiQuan Gray (RAY-Qwan); Balsa Koprivica (Ball-Sha Ko-Pra-Vizza); Sardaar Calhoun (Suh-DAR Cal-Hoon); Tanor Ngom (Tuh-NOR en-GOM)

**Florida State Basketball
By The Numbers**

1.00 Freshman Quincy Ballard is perfect from the field (three of three) in the first five games of his Florida State career. He has made each of his last two attempts in the last two games against Georgia Tech and UCF.

1.00 Junior Sardaar Calhoun was a perfect two of two from the free throw line against UCF on Saturday night in his first trip to the line as a Seminole.

.500 Freshman Scottie Barnes is shooting .500 from the field (nine of 18) and averaging 12.0 points scored per game in the last two Florida State games.

.545 Senior M.J. Walker is shooting .545 from the 3-point line in the last two games (six of 11).

.591 Redshirt junior Anthony Polite is shooting .591 from the field (13 of 22) in the last three games. He made five of eight field goal attempts vs. UCF (.625 percent) in tying his career-high with 14 points scored.

.833 Sophomore Balsa Koprivica is shooting .833 from the field (five of six) in the last two games.

.917 Senior M.J. Walker is shooting 917 from the free throw line (22 of 24) in the last three games and is shooting a career-high .917 from the free throw line through the first five games of the 2020-21 season. He was a perfect 12 of 12 from the free throw line in scoring 17 points in Florida State's victory over Florida on December 12, 2020.

4 Florida State is undefeated, 4-0, when it outscores its opponent.

4 Redshirt junior RaiQuan Gray has made four consecutive free throws entering Monday's game against Gardner-Webb. He was a perfect two of two from the line against both Georgia Tech and UCF.

5 Florida State has earned a school record of five consecutive 20+ win seasons (26 wins in 2020, 29 wins in 2019, 23 wins in 2018, 26 wins in 2017 and 20 wins in 2016).

7 Florida State has seven players in its rotation (RaiQuan Gray, Balsa Koprivica, Anthony Polite, Scottie Barnes, M.J. Walker, Wyatt Wilkes and Malik Osborne) who all have experience as starters during their careers as Seminoles.

8 Eight Seminoles enter Monday's game averaging at least 13.6 minutes played per game while nine different players have played in all five of Florida State's game this season.

12.7 Redshirt junior Anthony Polite has scored in double figures in a career-high three consecutive games (14 vs. Florida, 10 vs. Georgia Tech and 14 vs. UCF) and is averaging 12.7 points per game during that stretch of three games.

WALKER IN FLORIDA STATE'S RECORD BOOK

Senior M.J. Walker, who is one of the top all-around shooters in the ACC, enters Monday's game against Gardner-Webb ranked ninth in Florida State history with his .802 career free throw shooting percentage and 12 in both 3-point field goals made (141) and attempted (399) in school history.

Career Free Throw Percentage — 9th — .802

Career 3-Point Field Goals Made — 12th — 141

Career 3-Point Field Goals Attempted — 12th — 399

NOTING M.J. WALKER'S SCORING EFFORT IN THE FIRST FIVE GAMES OF THE SEASON...

...He scored his season-high of 22 points in Florida State's game against UCF on Saturday night. It marked the seventh time in his career that he has scored 21 or more points in a game;

..He has scored in double figures in a career-best five consecutive games and is averaging a career-high 17.8 points scored per game as a senior. He has scored at least 14 points in each of the Seminoles' five games this season.

WALKER NEXT SEMINOLE TO REACH 1,000 CAREER POINTS

Senior M.J. Walker has scored a team-leading 89 points through the first five games of the 2020-21 season and enters Monday's game against Gardner-Webb with 873 points. He needs on 127 points to become the 48th player in school history to score 1,000 or more career points.

WALKER FROM THE 3-POINT LINE

Senior M.J. Walker made his season-high of four 3-point field goals in scoring his season-high of 22 points against UCF on Saturday night in Tallahassee. He has now made at least four 3-point field goals in 10 different games including his career-high of six made 3-point field goal in scoring 22 points at Miami on January 27, 2019.

Walker's 3-Point Field Goal Progression

Season	Games	3FGM	3FGA	Pct.	Notes
2017-18	35	41	119	.345	Averaged 1.2 3FGM/Game
2018-19	35	44	134	.328	Averaged 1.3 3FGM/Game
2019-20	26	44	122	.361	Averaged 1.7 3FGM/Game
2020-21	5	12	24	.500	<u>Averages a career-high 2.4 3FGM/Game</u>
Totals	101	141	399	.354	One of 12 players in school history with at least 140 3FGM

POLITE ON FIRE FROM THE BONUSPERE

Redshirt junior Anthony Polite tied his season-high with three 3-point field goals made for a career-high tying 14 points against UCF on Saturday night and enters Monday's game against Gardner-Webb shooting an astronomical .550 from the 3-point line. He is shooting .750 from the 3-point line (eight of 12) in the last three games after shooting .333 from beyond the arc (three of nine) in the first two games of the season.

Polite's Career-3-Point Progression

Season	Games	3FGM	3FGA	Pct.	Notes
2017-18	1	0	0	.000	A redshirt season
2018-19	30	11	46	.239	Averaged 0.4 3FGM /Game
2019-20	31	34	96	.354	Averaged 1.1 3FGM/Game
2020-21	5	11	20	.550	<u>Averaging 2.2 3FGM/Game</u>
Totals	67	56	162	.346	Averages 1.3 3FGM/Game in last two seasons

POLITE GOING TO THE BOARDS

Redshirt junior Anthony Polite tied his career-high with four offensive rebounds in Florida State's game against UCF on Saturday night. He enters Monday's game against Gardner-Webb with 11 offensive rebounds and 12 defensive rebounds for 23 total rebounds and a career-high 4.6 rebounds per game margin.

GRAY IS A MAN OF STEAL

Redshirt junior RaiQuan Gray totaled two steals in Florida State's game against UCF and enters Monday's game against Gardner-Webb tied for the team lead with eight steals through the first five games of the season. In 70 games during his career as a Seminole, he has earned 68 steals – an average of nearly one full steal per game. Gray's two steals against UCF marked the 16th multi- steal game of his career.

GRAY WITH CAREER-HIGH 14 POINTS AGAINST UCF

Redshirt junior RaiQuan Gray scored his career-high of 14 points in Florida State's game against UCF on Saturday night in Tallahassee. It marked the second time this season (and eighth time in his career) that he has scored in double figures. Gray's previous career-high of 13 points came in Florida State's victory over Notre Dame on January 25, 2020 at the Donald L. Tucker Center.

NOTING SCOTTIE BARNES...

...He is Florida State's team leader in assists with 20 and a 4.0 assists per game average. With 20 assists and only 11 turnovers his has an assist:turnover ratio of nearly 2:1 in the first five games of his career;

...He is tied for the team lead with eight steals (with redshirt junior RaiQuan Gray) and has earned at least one steal in each of the Seminoles' last four games. He totaled his career-high of four steals in Florida State's victory over Indiana in the ACC/Big Ten Challenge.

KOPRIVICA NAMED TO ACADEMIC DEAN'S LIST FOR FALL 2020

Sophomore Balsa Koprivica, a Sport Management major, was named to the Academic Dean's List for his work in the classroom during the fall of 2020. It's the second time in his career that he has earned academic honors as he also earned Dean's List honors during the fall of 2019. Koprivica was named to the ACC Academic Honor Roll in 2020 for the first time in his career.



**2020-21 Florida St. Men's Basketball
Combined Team Statistics
All games**

Game Records

Record	Overall	Home	Away	Neutral
ALL GAMES	4-1	4-1	0-0	0-0
CONFERENCE	1-0	1-0	0-0	0-0
NON-CONFERENCE	3-1	3-1	0-0	0-0

Score by Periods

Team	1st	2nd	OT	TOT
Florida St.	189	190	7	386
Opponents	150	188	5	343

Team Box Score

No.	Player				Total		3-Point		F-Throw		Rebounds								PTS	AVG		
		GP-GS	MIN	AVG	FG-FGA	FG%	3FG-FGA	3FG%	FT-FTA	FT%	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG	PF	DQ	A	TO			BLK	STL
23	WALKER, M.J.	5-5	169:19	33.9	22-50	.440	12-24	.500	33-36	.917	5	9	14	2.8	10	0	9	13	1	5	89	17.8
4	BARNES, Scottie	5-5	140:56	28.2	23-49	.469	3-12	.250	9-22	.409	6	15	21	4.2	11	0	20	11	0	8	58	11.6
2	POLITE, Anthony	5-5	149:50	30.0	19-37	.514	11-20	.550	5-10	.500	11	12	23	4.6	10	0	8	6	3	5	54	10.8
5	KOPRIVICA, Balsa	5-5	95:19	19.1	18-33	.545	0-0	.000	11-18	.611	7	18	25	5.0	11	1	4	8	4	1	47	9.4
1	GRAY, RaiQuan	5-5	128:58	25.8	17-35	.486	3-7	.429	6-10	.600	6	25	31	6.2	16	0	11	8	4	8	43	8.6
31	WILKES, Wyatt	5-0	68:06	13.6	9-26	.346	4-15	.267	0-0	.000	4	5	9	1.8	2	0	10	1	2	3	22	4.4
24	CALHOUN, Sardaar	5-0	49:37	9.9	7-18	.389	4-9	.444	2-2	1.000	1	4	5	1.0	2	0	2	1	0	2	20	4.0
11	JACK, Nathanael	3-0	18:29	6.2	4-7	.571	3-6	.500	1-2	.500	0	0	0	0.0	4	0	1	2	0	0	12	4.0
10	OSBORNE, Malik	5-0	100:56	20.2	5-15	.333	1-4	.250	4-4	1.000	10	10	20	4.0	13	0	2	4	1	5	15	3.0
0	EVANS, RayQuan	4-0	62:28	15.6	4-17	.235	0-3	.000	3-3	1.000	1	6	7	1.8	6	0	6	4	0	1	11	2.8
34	NGOM, Tanor	4-0	20:22	5.1	3-5	.600	0-0	.000	3-4	.750	1	3	4	1.0	4	0	0	1	2	1	9	2.3
15	BALLARD, Quincy	5-0	16:12	3.2	3-3	1.000	0-0	.000	0-1	.000	1	1	2	0.4	2	0	0	2	1	0	6	1.2
30	PRIETO, Harrison	2-0	04:29	2.2	0-0	.000	0-0	.000	0-2	.000	0	0	0	0.0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0.0
Team											6	6	12							1		
Total		5	1025		134-295	.454	41-100	.410	77-114	.675	59	114	173	34.6	92	1	73	63	18	39	386	77.2
Opponents		5	1025		114-271	.421	39-104	.375	76-97	.784	49	111	160	32.0	94	2	60	83	17	29	343	68.6

Team Statistics

	FSU	OPP
Scoring	386	343
Points per game	77.2	68.6
Scoring margin	+8.6	-
Field goals-att	134-295	114-271
Field goal pct	.454	.421
3 point fg-att	41-100	39-104
3-point FG pct	.410	.375
3-pt FG made per game	8.2	7.8
Free throws-att	77-114	76-97
Free throw pct	.675	.784
F-Throws made per game	15.4	15.2
Rebounds	173	160
Rebounds per game	34.6	32.0
Rebounding margin	+2.6	-
Assists	73	60
Assists per game	14.6	12.0
Turnovers	63	83
Turnovers per game	12.6	16.6
Turnover margin	+4.0	-
Assist/turnover ratio	1.2	0.7
Steals	39	29
Steals per game	7.8	5.8
Blocks	18	17
Blocks per game	3.6	3.4
Winning streak	0	-
Home win streak	0	-
Attendance	13677	0
Home games-Avg/Game	5-2735	0-0
Neutral site-Avg/Game	-	0-0

Team Results

Date	Opponent		Score	Att.
12/02/2020	North Florida	W	86-58	2720
12/09/2020	Indiana	Wot	69-67	2956
12/12/2020	Florida	W	83-71	2761
12/15/2020	Georgia Tech	W	74-61	2664
12/19/2020	UCF	L	74-86	2576

Leonard Hamilton's Quest For The Respect He Deserves In The College Basketball World

By Curt Weiler

Tallahassee Democrat

November 29, 2020

Twenty-one years ago, a Miami columnist detailed 20 questions with Miami head basketball coach Leonard Hamilton.

The first question of that 1999 interview immediately jumped out. Would Hamilton shave three years off his life in order to win a national championship?

At the time, Hamilton was in his ninth year of what would be 10 years spent atop the Hurricanes' program. He had led Miami's transition from independence into the Big East. Hamilton built the program from a 1-17 Big East record in its first year in the conference to what would be a second-place finish in the conference (15-3 record) and a spot as high as No. 9 in the Associated Press poll during the 1998-99 season.

The question wasn't especially farfetched as the Hurricanes would enter that year's NCAA Tournament as a No. 2 seed, although they made a second-round exit after being upset by No. 10 seed Purdue.

The answer Hamilton gave after a 30-second pause says a lot about the type of person he is.

"It's sad when that's a hard question," Hamilton said.

"I know I should say that I want to keep the three years of my life, but to win would mean so much to so many other people in our program that I'd have to say shave the three years off my life. It would be worth the sacrifice."

In the two decades plus since this interview, Hamilton left the Miami job for a brief stint coaching Michael Jordan and the Washington Wizards before landing at Florida State. He enters the 2020-21 basketball season leading an FSU basketball program coming off one of the best seasons in program history.

On a more personal note, he passed longtime Georgia Tech coach Bobby Cremins for fifth-most wins in ACC men's basketball history this past February. He enters this season with 582 career wins as a head coach, although the NCAA recognizes just 560 as FSU had all 22 wins from its 2006-07 season vacated due to an academic fraud scandal.

Regardless of which win total you subscribe to, he's expected to join an elite group of college basketball coaches that have amassed 600 career Division-I wins within the next few years. There are only 39 members of that club currently, although a few more coaches will beat Hamilton to the historic landmark.

"The bottom line is I don't think he's ever gotten the national publicity he deserves," ESPN college basketball analyst Dick Vitale said of Hamilton.

"When you think about the ACC, that's not cupcake city, man. You think about that league and what he's achieved, I believe he ranks in the top five all-time in wins in the conference. There are some great coaches in that league. That is an incredible achievement. Leonard just goes about his business, he works his butt off, he's a recruiting genius and he's also a very solid tactician. I don't think people give him credit for the job he does."

And if you talk to anyone who knows Hamilton well, they'll tell you he's done it the right way.

"This guy has always been a winner. He's always been successful and he's always won because of his heart," FSU assistant coach Charlton "C.Y." Young told the *Democrat*.

"First thing you learned in the Bible is the more you give, the more you receive. He has given so much to people and it comes back threefold."

'Wake Up, Knucklehead'

Hamilton twice helped break the color barrier during his collegiate basketball career, arriving as one of the first Black student-athletes both at Gaston Community College and the University of Tennessee at Martin.

He parlayed his playing career into a role on the Austin Peay coaching staff, first as a graduate assistant from 1971 through 1973 and then as an assistant coach for the 1973-74 season, helping the Governors to the program's first two NCAA Tournament appearances in program history.

This success made Austin Peay head coach Lake Kelly a coaching commodity who began to attract attention from a number of larger programs. Despite having just one season as a full-time coach at that point, Hamilton channeled courage and walked into the office of the Austin Peay president, asking if he would be considered for the head coach position should Kelly go elsewhere.

The president, citing his pending retirement within the next few years, told Hamilton that he couldn't bring himself to make him the first Black coach in the history of the Ohio Valley Conference, although he personally wanted to give him the job.

After this discouraging development, Hamilton briefly left coaching before he was convinced to return when legendary Kentucky coach Joe B. Hall offered him a spot on his staff, making him the first Black coach in the program's extensive history.

Although he still had aspirations of eventually becoming the head coach of a traditional basketball power early in his time in Kentucky, he looks back now with that fateful meeting with the Austin Peay President as divine intervention which led him down the path he's paved.

"It's almost like God reached down in heaven and slapped me on both sides of the face (and said), 'Wake up, knucklehead. Those programs that are already in great shape with great facilities and great tradition don't need you,'" Hamilton told the *Democrat*.

"It was almost like I came to the realization that with the type of personality I have, I would be better served by taking jobs that were not in metropolitan areas, jobs that had consistently been challenging for other people to be consistent at winning.

"Those jobs would offer me the motivation and the challenge that I needed to go in and prove that I was capable of doing something that had not been done. Those types of opportunities really became what motivated me and I was excited and I started looking for jobs that needed to be rebuilt."

A Career Spent At "Football Schools"

Hamilton spent 12 years as an assistant at Kentucky, the final six of those as the associate head coach. He helped lead the Wildcats to the program's fifth NCAA Tournament Championship in 1978, Kentucky's first national title in 20 years at the time.

When the time came for Hamilton to take his first head coaching position, however, it wasn't with nearly as prolific a basketball program. He took over the reins at Oklahoma State ahead of the 1986-87 season, inheriting a program that had made the NCAA Tournament just once in the previous 21 seasons.

In the 21 years before he arrived in Stillwater, the Cowboys had finished above .500 in Big 8 play just twice.

Hamilton never took OSU to the NCAA Tournament -- the Cowboys made the NIT in each of his final two seasons -- but his tenure laid the groundwork for the success that followed years after his departure. OSU made the NCAA Tournament each of the next five years and 13 of the ensuing 15 years after his departure.

He moved on from OSU to accept the head coach position at Miami. He arrived ahead of the program's sixth year back in existence after Miami was without a basketball team from 1971 until 1985.

Once again, he found himself coaching a basketball team at a football school. The Hurricanes' football program won its third national championship the year before Hamilton arrived and won another in Hamilton's second season at UM in 1991.

There's something about this exact situation that aligns well with Hamilton's unique self-motivation.

"He had to investigate and evaluate programs where if he didn't let anybody outwork him, which is one of his big mantras, he could go in there and people would know that if he could turn it around then it was because of his effort and his talent and his focus that other people couldn't get it done," Stan Jones, a longtime assistant coach on Hamilton's staff, told the *Democrat*.

"That would be the way he would have to build his head coaching career. I think he's always looked at it that way, as I've got to take a program that needs a lot of restoration and if I do the restoration then nobody could say that it was given to me, nobody can say I didn't earn it. I think he's proven that at every stop along his journey."

It took him time to build the program up, but the gradual growth paid off when the Hurricanes made the NCAA Tournament in his eighth season in 1997-98. That snapped a skid of nearly 40 years since Miami's last NCAA Tournament appearance in 1960.

After a one-year stint coaching Michael Jordan and the Washington Wizards in the NBA, Hamilton landed back in the college game, this time at Florida State.

Taking over at FSU ahead of the 2002-03 season, Hamilton again took over a basketball program at a football powerhouse. He got to FSU just after the football program's record streak of 14 consecutive top-five finishes was snapped in 2001.

Similar to his previous stops, he again inherited a program in desperate need of strong leadership. The Seminoles, after a strong start upon their arrival in the basketball-heavy ACC, had fallen on hard times. In the nine years before his arrival, FSU had failed to win more than six ACC games in any season and finished above .500 just twice.

It again took him time to build the program his way, but he found quicker success this time. After a pair of losing seasons in his first three years at FSU, Hamilton has since led the Seminoles to winning seasons in each of the last 15 years.

He took FSU to its first Elite Eight since 1992 in 2018 and achieved perhaps the least likely accomplishment this past season, bringing home the program's first ACC regular-season championship.

"Leonard really has built programs, not just taken over programs at so-called football schools. As a result of that, especially if you're building, you don't have tradition there for basketball," Duke head coach Mike Krzyzewski told the *Democrat*.

"It's not that easy. It's not easy anywhere, but it's especially hard in those situations. Because he's a tireless worker, good guy, great coach, he's been able to do that at all these locations. His most recent success story is Florida State and it's a huge one."

Were it not for the cancellation of the NCAA Tournament this past March due to the coronavirus pandemic, Hamilton could have very well made his first Final Four as a head coach. Even better, his Seminoles were one of the trendiest picks to win the entire tournament.

The ascension of the FSU basketball program to another tier has been well-timed as the FSU football program has fallen on hard times unlike any over the last 40 years.

"He's never had an easy job. Let's face it, he's had jobs where football has been dominant. Miami, Florida State, especially the times he arrived," Vitale said.

"When he arrived, they were (football) giants. Right now, the people at Florida State are talking about, I guarantee it, when does basketball start? You've never heard that cry before."

Rightful Perspective

Nolan Richardson knows what it takes to succeed as a basketball coach at a football school.

He inherited a similar situation as Hamilton at FSU and Miami when he took over the Arkansas basketball program in 1985. Nearly a decade later, he became just the second Black head coach to win an NCAA basketball championship when he led the Razorbacks to the 1993-94 title, joining Georgetown's John Thompson Jr., who became the first in 1984.

Only two more Black coaches have joined this short list since Richardson, Kentucky coach Tubby Smith in 1998 and Connecticut's Kevin Ollie in 2014. Although these four all have titles while Hamilton has never made a Final Four, he's got more career wins than all of them except for Smith.

Even though Hamilton is far older than one would believe from looking at him -- he turned 72 in August -- he remains one of the likeliest coaches to join this elite club of Black coaches who have reached the pinnacle of college basketball.

"I don't really think he gets the kind of respect that he would get if he was a white coach with those kind of victories," Richardson told the *Democrat*.

"I think that's the thing that I've always said. You have to prove yourself more than once, twice, three or four or five times and it's a constant. For him to be able to win 600 games, that's quite an accomplishment. I understand what it means simply because I was in the same arena that he's in and sometimes you don't play on a level playing field that the others are playing on."

Now entering his 33rd season as a college basketball head coach, Hamilton has been one of the bridges from the last generation of Black coaches to the next generation. A mild-mannered person, especially in public settings, it's taken Hamilton time to get used to being a mentor to that next generation like Thompson and Richardson were to him.

"I try to encourage him more that he needs to be more of a voice out there in this winter of his career because he has so much to give and he has so much knowledge and he has so much savvy on how to navigate an athletic department, dealing with the media, dealing with recruiting, dealing with all the things that go on with being a successful head coach for anybody," Jones said.

"Whether you're a minority or not, he's a guy that really understands this business and he's incredibly smart and thinks through everything at a level that a lot of people that just play off of their emotions don't realize that's the key to success is how deep you're able to think. He is that guy."

Young is one coach who has taken advantage of that mentorship. He's now in his eighth season as an assistant coach under Hamilton at FSU. Although he didn't have much of a relationship with Hamilton before joining his staff, Young now views getting him the respect he feels he's deserved in the college basketball world as one of his biggest goals.

"Everybody is always asking, 'Why's he still doing it at his age?' Because he wants to walk out letting people know (he) was the best," Young said.

"One day, they're all going to say it. If you don't want to say it, we're going to make you say it. My goal for J. Leonard Hamilton is to get him in the Hall of Fame, to win a national title...I want his name to be synonymous with winning. Winning on the court, off the court, in life."

While Hamilton may not be a household name to the average college basketball fan, he's well-respected by the major figures in the coaching world.

"He does not get the attention and the recognition that he so richly deserves. Especially in this last decade at Florida State where Florida State is one of the top programs in the United States," Krzyzewski said.

"Our conference has some of the top programs in the United States and Florida State is one of them and it's a result of Leonard and his staff doing incredible work there."

Added North Carolina head coach Roy Williams, "Leonard really cares about his players. He's not only concerned with what they do on the court. He does a great job making sure his players do well off the court, in the classroom, and he helps them get ready for life after basketball. I admire him tremendously. He is one of the people that I would be very pleased if he coached my son."

Hamilton may never reach the top of the college basketball world. He hasn't discussed how many years of coaching he may have left, but it's a number that is dwindling whatever it is.

This may prevent Hamilton from getting the respect many in the college basketball world feel he deserves while he's still coaching. But George Raveling, another mentor to Hamilton who won 337 games as the head coach at Washington State, Iowa and Southern California between 1972 and 1994, is confident that Hamilton will get his due in time.

"Many years ago in a speech, Malcolm X said that history is best situated to reward a man's deeds. My interpretation of that is that ultimately history will put things into their rightful perspective," Raveling told the *Democrat*.

"If the story's not told today, it will be told tomorrow. History will put him in his rightful context at some point be it today, tomorrow or in the distant future. His contributions to life and the profession and the race and his family, those chapters are still being written right now.

"We're probably 20 chapters into a 30-chapter book right now. But at some point, history will take over and it will put him in his rightful perspective. Even if we as human beings can't do it or accept it or want to do it, history will do it for us."

M.J. Walker: FSU's Junkyard Dog
By Jim Crosby
Unconquered Magazine
December 11, 2020

It takes a little over four hours of non-stop driving to get from Riverdale, Ga., to Tallahassee. In 2017 the Georgia 6A Basketball Player of the year M. J. Walker made the trip at the invitation of Seminole Basketball. It was a football weekend. The Noles were playing Clemson.

Walker, a quarterback/defensive back at Jonesboro High, was also being courted by the Seminole football team as well as by other ACC and SEC schools. The McDonald's All-American chose to play basketball at Florida State over offers from Georgia Tech, Ohio State, UCLA, Va. Tech and NC State.

Walker remembers: "After the game I was hanging with the basketball players and just liked the environment. That was the biggest thing. I liked the coaching staff. Florida State is one of the top 20 schools in the country so I could get the best education while playing at the same time."

It was pretty much a slam dunk that basketball would win out for M. J. Walker. The basketball DNA was strong in the Walker family. His mother, Jackie, won the Division II national championship at Hampton, with a 33-1 record in 1988. His father, James, played at Norfolk State, where he enjoyed a 101-22 record while twice reaching the Elite Eight.

Four years later, in this pandemic-plagued environment, Walker is being counted on to take over a leadership role on a team that lost three of the top four scorers from the ACC Championship squad. He averaged 10.6 points per game in 26 games before coronavirus halted the college basketball season.

Walker has been preparing all along for his new role and feels ready now as a senior.

"I looked at guys like Trent Forrest, Phil Cofer and others and watched them as leaders. That helped me become the player I am today," said Walker. "I just picked their brain while being shown how to lead. They did it really well."

Coach Hamilton is confident that Walker will fill the role: "I think if you go back in his career you might see a lot of games where we were struggling, may have been down at the half, even as a freshman he always made big shots.

He has that level of confidence that when the game is on the line, he has the ability to rise up and come through." Junior guard Wyatt Wilkes comes from a basketball family. His father has coached women's basketball at Rollins for 34 years and his grandfather is Glenn Wilkes, the Hall of Fame long-time coach at Stetson. Wilkes has no doubts about Walker filling the leadership role

"As a teammate he just wants to win so bad," Wilkes said. "He is so for the team it is hard not to love the guy. He puts out the max every day. He is always picking everybody up, especially the young guys."

M. J. leaves little doubt where he sees the best example of how to lead every day. It starts at the top: "Coach Hamilton is like no other person. He is always looking out for the other person, never for himself. He is always looking for how we can make the program better and how his players can have the best life after basketball. He is a great person that I look up to and want to be like one day."

While serving as team captain in his junior season (2020), Walker helped lead the team to a 26-5 record and the ACC regular season title. With the talent on that team, including first-round NBA picks Patrick Williams and Devin Vassell, many felt that team was poised to make a national championship run.

Having lost four players might cause some to question if the Seminoles can pick up in the 2020-21 season where they left off. Senior Nathanael Jack, a pure-shooting guard from Canada who took a circuitous route to Tallahassee, has little doubt they will be just as strong and maybe better.

“No doubt in my mind that we can be even better than we were last year,” Jack said. “We have been saying that and a lot of people look at us like we are crazy. But since we lost those players a lot of other players, like myself, who didn’t get to play a lot have gotten a lot better in the system. It has definitely shown up in practice.”

One thing Jack is sure about is that M. J. Walker will set the example: “I love M. J. One of the things you notice about M.J. right off the bat is that he doesn’t do this to make friends or to build friendships. He is very serious about what he does. He is serious about training and getting better. He is not afraid to call anybody out. He will stand for the betterment of the team. At the end of the day everybody respects him for that.”

One of the main reasons Hamilton-coached teams continue to excel is the emphasis he places on defense. “We have a symbol we label ‘Stopper,’ says Hamilton. It is the picture of a mean Junkyard Dog. He keeps people out of his territory. So we take that approach with our Junkyard Defense.”

Then Hamilton outlined how M. J. Walker perfectly represents that likeness: “M. J. has that hard-nosed, tough Junkyard Dog Mentality. He’ll bite you if you come into his territory. When he speaks they listen. He knows our system.”

In 2020 while the Seminoles were recording an impressive 26-5 record, Walker showed how valuable he was on both ends of the court grabbing 44 rebounds while making 20 steals and blocking six shots. He also added 38 assists and averaged 25 minutes of playing time per game. His 10.6 points per game was third best and he knocked down 44 three-pointers (tied for the team lead).

RaiQuan Gray, a redshirt junior from Fort Lauderdale, has played his way into a starting role and will be counted on for team leadership as well. He has seen M.J.’s improvement each year and knows he will play an important role this season.

“We will rely on M.J. a lot as far as the offensive and defensive ends are concerned,” Gray said. “Him being a competitor will set an example. He plays hard every possession. He gives his all and brings that to the court.”

While looking ahead to his final season with great anticipation, Walker paused to reflect on the whole picture from high school stardom to his important role as a senior leader on the team. He expressed his appreciation for the main thing that made it all possible.

“The scholarship is one thing that I never take for granted,” Walker said. “The Boosters give so much to the program, but not only that, I know they care about us after basketball. The scholarship means a lot to me. It is something that I will always appreciate and thank them for. They go out of their way to help us and they don’t have to do that. I definitely appreciate everything they have done for this program.”

While Walker is an NBA prospect he is also thinking ahead as to how he can continue to make an impact with his life.

“I want to work with kids and teach them how to play the game like I learned how,” Walker said. “Also teach them about life situations like paying taxes, creating bank accounts and small things growing up that are not talked about in school sometimes.”

Asked how he would like to be remembered at Florida State when his playing days are over M.J. replied: “As a person who always gave A-plus effort. Always gave the most and made sure he didn’t take any plays off. A tough guy who didn’t let circumstance hold him down. One who was resilient and able to overcome any problem he was facing. And a caring guy.”

When the ball goes up for the opening tipoff each night keep your eyes on M. J. Walker. He will be the one giving it everything he has on every possession.

Game 1 -- Florida State 86, North Florida 58

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Senior M.J. Walker scored a game-high 17 points and No. 18 Florida State (1-0) opened its 2020-21 season with an 86-58 win against North Florida (0-4) at the Donald L. Tucker Center. The Seminoles maintained a steady lead throughout the game in winning its 24th consecutive game at home. The win was the Seminoles' sixth consecutive in the series against North Florida. The win upped Florida State's record at the Tucker Center to 66-3 since a victory over Notre Dame on February 7, 2015. The Seminoles have won at home at a 95.6 percent winning percentage in the last four seasons. Reigning ACC Coach of the Year, Leonard Hamilton, has won his 24th opener in the last 26 seasons. Tonight's win also extends the Seminoles' second longest streak in the nation of 39 consecutive non-conference home games.

**Florida State 86, North Florida 58
Donald L. Tucker Center**

December 2, 2020

N. Florida	Min	FG	3FG	FT	O-D	Reb	F	A	T	B	S	Pts.
Endicott	23	3-6	2-2	0-1	4-2	6	3	2	2	0	0	8
James	30	4-9	0-3	5-7	1-6	7	1	2	2	0	0	13
Aybar	23	1-6	0-1	0-0	2-3	5	4	1	6	0	1	2
Adedoyin	28	1-4	1-2	2-2	0-3	3	2	4	4	0	2	5
Placer	31	4-9	3-6	0-0	0-1	1	2	2	5	0	1	11
Burkhardt	22	1-4	1-4	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	1	1	1	13
Parker	13	1-2	0-0	0-0	0-1	1	2	0	2	0	0	2
Crews	20	4-6	4-6	0-0	0-1	1	0	2	2	0	1	12
Lanier	5	0-2	0-2	2-2	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Berenbaum	4	0-2	0-1	0-0	1-0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Team Totals	200	19-50	11-27	9-12	8-19	27	15	14	24	1	6	58

Fl. State	Min	FG	3FG	FT	O-D	Reb	F	A	T	B	S	Pts.
Gray	18	4-8	0-2	0-0	1-4	5	1	1	2	1	4	8
Koprivica	17	4-8	0-0	5-6	2-3	5	3	1	1	2	1	13
Polite	24	3-7	1-2	0-0	1-2	3	2	2	1	1	1	7
Barnes	24	4-11	0-2	0-3	3-3	6	0	6	2	0	0	8
Walker	27	4-8	3-5	6-6	2-2	4	3	2	0	0	0	17
Evans	16	2-5	0-1	0-0	1-2	3	1	1	0	0	0	4
Calhoun	15	3-6	2-4	0-0	1-2	3	1	0	0	0	1	8
Wilkes	17	2-5	0-3	0-0	2-3	5	0	5	0	2	4	6
Osborne	17	2-4	0-2	2-2	3-0	3	1	0	1	0	2	6
Ngom	7	1-3	0-0	1-2	1-2	3	3	0	0	1	1	3
Jack	11	2-4	1-3	1-2	0-0	0	1	1	2	0	0	6
Ballard	7	1-1	0-0	2-0	0-1	1	0	0	1	1	0	2
Team Totals	200	32-70	7-24	15-21	17-25	42	16	19	10	6	12	86

FG% - North Florida, .380 Florida State, .457. 3FG% - North Florida, .407, Florida State, .292. FT% - North Florida, .750, Florida State, .714. Technical Fouls: North Florida -- None. Florida State -- None. Referees - A.J. Desai, Tony Henderson, Jeff Pon. Attendance: 2,720

North Florida	21	37	-	58
Florida State	36	50	-	86

Game 2 -- Florida State 69, Indiana 67

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Freshman Scottie Barnes scored the game winning basket with 1.8 seconds remaining to play in overtime to lift No. 20 Florida State to a 69-67 win over Indiana at the Donald L. Tucker Center in the 22nd Annual ACC/Big Ten Challenge. Barnes was stellar in his first career overtime game as he scored his first career 3-point field goal and then hit the winner to help the Seminoles earn their 10th consecutive overtime victory. Barnes totaled nine points, five assists, four rebounds, and four steals to help the Seminoles improve to 2-0. The freshman opened and closed out the game with field goals in only his second game and second start in a Florida State uniform. Barnes is a candidate for the Bob Cousy award and has earned spots on the Naismith and Wooden Award watch lists. Indiana moved to 3-2 on the season. The win was Florida State's 67th in its last 70 games at home. The Seminoles have now won 25 consecutive home games and 40 straight non-conference games at home. Florida State turned up the defensive pressure in the overtime period. After surrendering an old-fashioned three-point play to Indiana's Trayce Jackson-Davis to open the extra session, the Seminoles outscored the Hoosiers 7-2 over the final 4:38 of the extra session. The Hoosiers were unable to score from the floor and managed on two free throws in the final 4:38 of overtime.

**Florida State 69, Indiana 67 (OT)
Donald L. Tucker Center**

December 9, 2020

Indiana	Min	FG	3FG	FT	O-D	Reb	F	A	T	B	S	Pts.
Jackson-Davis	41	8-15	0-0	9-12	7-10	17	2	0	3	2	0	25
Thompson	34	3-5	0-0	3-4	2-4	6	3	1	2	1	1	9
Durham	38	3-10	1-4	2-2	0-5	5	1	4	2	0	1	9
Franklin	31	3-9	0-2	3-4	3-5	8	4	1	3	0	1	9
Phinisee	39	2-10	1-5	4-6	0-0	0	2	2	1	0	1	9
Galloway	20	0-3	0-1	0-0	0-1	1	2	2	1	0	0	0
Hunter	16	2-4	2-3	0-0	1-2	3	2	0	1	0	0	6
Lander	7	0-1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Team Totals	225	21-57	4-15	21-28	15-29	44	17	10	14	3	4	67

Fl. State	Min	FG	3FG	FT	O-D	Reb	F	A	T	B	S	Pts.
Gray	31	5-10	1-2	1-4	1-8	9	4	4	0	1	1	12
Koprivica	21	6-12	0-0	1-1	3-5	8	5	0	1	0	0	12
Polite	33	3-8	2-6	1-4	4-4	8	3	0	0	1	0	9
Barnes	30	3-10	1-2	2-4	2-2	4	3	5	2	0	4	9
Walker	41	6-15	2-6	5-6	1-0	1	3	1	5	0	0	19
Ngom	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Evans	13	0-4	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Osborne	31	1-3	1-1	2-2	4-5	9	3	1	0	1	2	5
Ballard	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Calhoun	14	1-4	1-2	0-0	0-1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Wilkes	8	0-3	0-1	0-0	1-0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0
Prieto	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Team Totals	225	25-69	8-20	11-21	19-25	44	22	13	10	4	8	69

FG% - Indiana, .368, Florida State, .362. 3FG% - Indiana, .267, Florida State, .400. FT% - Indiana, .750, Florida State, .524. Technical Fouls: Indiana -- None. Florida State -- None. Referees - Roger Ayers, Bill Covington, Jr., Mike Roberts. Attendance: 2,956

Indiana	31	31	5	-	67
Florida State	33	29	7	-	69

Game 3 -- Florida State 83, Florida 71

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Highly touted freshman Scottie Barnes scored 17 points and No. 20 Florida State extended its dominance against the Gators with an 83-71 victory that came after Florida suddenly lost its best player. The Seminoles led by as many as 18 in the second half. They ended up extending their winning streak against Florida to seven games, tying the longest by either team in the series. They also stretched their winning streak against nonconference opponents at home to 41 and won their 26th straight at home. Barnes, Anthony Polite and M.J. Walker made this one look easy most of the day. Barnes, the top-rated recruit of Hamilton's tenure in Tallahassee, had two thunderous dunks and was 7-of-10 shooting. It was a breakout game for the 6-foot-9 point guard many expect to be an NBA lottery pick.

**Florida State 83, Florida 71
Donald L. Tucker Center**

December 12, 2020

Florida	Min	FG	3FG	FT	O-D	Reb	F	A	T	B	S	Pts.
Johnson	4	2-3	0-1	1-1	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Castleton	21	3-4	0-0	1-3	4-8	7	3	0	1	1	2	7
Mann	29	7-17	2-7	1-1	0-3	4	4	7	3	0	1	17
Locke	24	2-16	2-5	2-2	0-0	0	2	1	3	0	0	8
Lewis	38	6-13	4-5	3-5	2-2	4	3	3	5	3	2	19
Appleby	23	2-7	2-4	0-0	0-2	2	3	1	5	0	1	6
Payne	16	1-2	0-0	0-0	1-1	2	3	0	0	3	0	2
Glover	12	2-4	0-0	0-0	0-2	2	1	1	2	0	0	4
Duruji	13	0-1	0-0	1-2	0-1	1	3	1	0	0	0	1
Lane	2	0-1	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Osifo	15	0-1	0-0	2-2	1-2	3	2	0	1	1	0	2
Team Totals	200	26-59	10-23	11-16	10-24	34	24	14	20	8	6	71

Fl. State	Min	FG	3FG	FT	O-D	Reb	F	A	T	B	S	Pts.
Gray	24	2-5	0-0	1-2	2-6	8	3	2	3	2	1	5
Koprivica	16	3-7	0-0	0-1	0-3	3	1	0	3	1	0	6
Polite	28	4-7	3-4	3-4	2-3	5	1	2	1	1	1	14
Barnes	28	7-10	1-2	2-6	0-2	2	3	5	3	0	1	17
Walker	30	2-5	1-2	12-12	0-2	2	1	3	4	0	3	17
Osborne	21	1-5	0-1	0-0	1-1	2	4	0	1	0	1	2
Evans	18	1-4	0-1	3-3	0-3	3	2	2	1	0	0	5
Wilkes	17	2-5	1-4	0-0	0-0	0	0	2	0	0	0	5
Calhoun	7	1-3	1-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0	0	1	3
Ngom	6	2-2	0-0	2-2	0-1	1	1	0	0	0	0	6
Ballard	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jack	3	1-1	1-1	0-0	0-0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3
Team Totals	200	26-54	8-16	23-30	8-25	33	18	17	16	4	8	83

FG% - Florida, .424, Florida State, .481. 3FG% - Florida, .435, Florida State, .500. FT% - Florida, .688, Florida State, .767. Technical Fouls: Florida -- None. Florida State -- None. Referees - Ted Valetine, Lee Cassell, Doug Shows. Attendance: 2,761

Florida	35	36	-	71
Florida State	45	38	-	83

Game 4 -- Florida State 74 Georgia Tech 61

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Freshman guard Scottie Barnes scored 14 of his 16 points after halftime and the 15th-ranked Seminoles pulled away midway through the second half to beat Georgia Tech 74-61. M.J. Walker scored 14 points and Balsa Koprivica added 10 points and eight rebounds. The

Seminoles won for the 27th straight time in Tallahassee, including all four games to open the 2020-21 season. Michael Devoe had 21 points, while Jordan Usher and Moses Wright added 12 apiece for Georgia Tech. The Yellow Jackets used a 15-0 run to get back into the game in the second half, but the Seminoles never relinquished their lead. The Yellow Jackets went 22 of 51 (43%) from the floor but just 5 of 20 (25%) on 3s. The Seminoles shot 27 of 51 (53%) from the floor and 8 for 17 (47%) from 3-point range. Florida State has won 15 of the last 17 meetings in the series.

**Florida State 74, Georgia Tech 61
Donald L. Tucker Center**

December 15, 2020

Ga. Tech	Min	FG	3FG	FT	O-D	Reb	F	A	T	B	S	Pts.
Usher	26	5-9	2-4	0-0	1-3	4	3	3	3	1	3	12
Wright	33	3-6	0-1	6-8	2-0	2	5	0	1	1	0	12
Devoe	35	7-15	2-6	5-6	1-3	4	2	0	4	0	0	21
Parham	17	0-2	0-2	0-0	0-2	2	1	1	1	0	1	0
Alvarado	38	3-7	1-3	0-0	0-1	1	3	1	2	0	2	7
Sturdivant	23	2-5										