

# Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

**Florida State Seminoles**

**Coach Leonard Hamilton**

**Jamir Watkins**

**Taylor Bol Bowen**

Men's Press Conference



with the internet and where they're rank and social media. Sometimes they have a tendency to lose perspective on things that are important.

I think it takes -- with the new model that we're operating with, consistently having a lot of new players every year, that's going to take an adjustment, not only for the players, but for coaches.

For instance, the year I think we went to the Sweet 16 or Elite Eight Devin Vassell was the only freshman new player on our team. Now I have ten new players.

So teaching, communicating with them, their level of focus, and as coaches us adjusting to how best can you prepare a team with that many new players and be ready to play by the time the season starts is an adjustment that we all are making.

As I talk to my colleagues around the country, it seems like we all are kind of trying different things and seeing what works because this is a new system that we all are working hard to adjust to.

**Q. Kind of going off of that with the transfer portal and just the ease of players being able to move wherever they want to and, like you said, having a bunch of new guys coming in, how do you build something over time and implement and see that personal and team growth when there is the opportunity to constantly see that change? How can you kind of have that?**

LEONARD HAMILTON: Realistic. We all are adjusting to a new change. For me to answer that correctly I have to go through this era of adjustment that we all are making. I can give you an answer that maybe might sound good, but in reality this is new for all of us.

When you have ten new guys that you are trying to integrate in your system, it's like starting over and taking a new job. So to tell you how we're going to do it and what's the best way to be efficient in doing it is maybe -- I would be just giving you a conversation.

But I think that we all have to figure this out because it's

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach Leonard Hamilton.

**Q. Defense was causing turnovers last year, but still finished middle of the road in terms of defensive efficiency. What do you think was the disconnect?**

LEONARD HAMILTON: I'm going to try to forget last year, to be honest with you. We've watched film and evaluated our shortcomings.

I think we started off not being crazy about the portal, but the portal allowed us to bring in youngsters that fit more the way we want to play. I feel more confident that the challenges we went through last year, we've addressed them properly, no doubt, in order to play the kind of defense we've become accustomed to, you have to have quality of depth to sustain your effort for long periods of time and not playing guys third 33, 34, 35 minutes has not been helpful for us the last year.

I think now we have the quality of depth that's going to allow us to sustain the effort for longer periods of time, and I think it's going to make a difference in our fundamental play, not allowing yourself to turn the ball over, also be fatigued, any of those things. We're able to get out and run a little better. Cuts will be a little harder. With improved perimeter shooting, I think we're moving in the right direction.

**Q. You're entering your 23rd season being the head coach of Florida State. Can you reflect on your time here and how you have seen college basketball adapt as year one goes to year 23?**

LEONARD HAMILTON: I think it's more challenging for the young people because they're more distracted, you know,



here and it's not going anywhere. It's here to stay. We have to find ways to take more players, teach, develop, and develop the mentality that this takes to go out and be successful at the level that we're participating in.

Right now I think we're all learning on the fly.

**Q. With the transfer portal, looking into this new season, you've brought in a couple of new guys like Bostyn Holt and Justin Thomas. What have you seen from their production and how do you feel like they can help your team?**

LEONARD HAMILTON: We have five freshmen. We have three portal guys, and National Junior College Player of the Year. It's challenging. In those two particular young men, I think they're older. They're mature. They've been around a little bit more, and they're probably making an easier transition because of the experience that they've gathered through the years, especially Bostyn, who has played part guard a lot at the schools where he has been playing at.

However, he has been in more of a walk-down setup let me call a play type of system. That's not the way we play. It's been challenging to him to be pushing the ball, feeling the lanes, picking up nine to four feet, the nine and the elbows, and playing aggressive defensively, because that's not what he is accustomed to.

But he is just now starting to figure it out.

Justin was not in summer school this summer, so he didn't come until the fall because he had to graduate in order to be eligible. I think he is starting to figure it out as well.

The older, more mature guys who have been around are making an easier transition. The five high school guys have been the best players on their high school teams, so they've been what you call "the man." Now we have to be one of the men.

That's an adjustment that all youngsters make when you go to college, when you have to end up blending in and playing for the team and not so much individual and what you have to do for your team to be successful.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Jamir.

**Q. My question is, what are some of the changes you as an athlete have implemented for the growth and success with the new guys on the team?**

JAMIR WATKINS: I would just say us being connected off the court. We know that we do a lot of communicating as far as, like, our defense. So communication goes a long

way. So off the court we have to be connected.

**Q. You had an interesting summer. You were in the NBA Draft. Then withheld your name. Went into the transfer portal. Came back to Florida State. Can you talk about that process and your talks with coach that let you to come back to FSU?**

JAMIR WATKINS: I was communicating with coach throughout the entire process. Once I decided it was a no-brainer to going back to Florida State.

**Q. Going through that NBA experience and having to work on some of those ball screens and shooting and consistency, just what can you say about how you've elevated your game throughout the summer to be prepared to the next time that you are in front of those NBA scouts, what you are going to show them?**

JAMIR WATKINS: I feel like I was a blessing to go through the process, so I felt like it was a blessing. Just to be able to be put in that position, I'm blessed to be able to have it.

I would say it gave me a boost coming back to college because I felt like I'm a little more advanced and I seen what it takes to be at that level. So just coming back just trying to pour it into my young guys and help them because I know that's where they want to be at the end of the day.

So just pouring into my young guys. It's kind of shown me and helping me mature so that when I get back to that stage I'll be ready.

**Q. Jamir, you averaged 9.5 points at BCU. You make a jump to 15 points at FSU. What do you think led to that, and how can you use last season to translate into the season going ahead?**

JAMIR WATKINS: What I think led to it is just me maturing off the court kind of helped me stepping into the new role that Coach Hamilton trusted me to be in. Just taking on a new role and just trusting in myself, having faith in myself as well as the team, and just playing my heart out.

Going out there and going as hard as I can and it led to success. That's what I'm going to continue to do.

THE MODERATOR: Jamir, thank you. You can switch spots with Taylor. A few minutes with Taylor.

**Q. Taylor, one of the things you've talked about that's dear to your heart is the No. 10 because your brother wore it. Would you like to explain the relationship between you and your brother and why his number means so much to you?**

TAYLOR BOL BOWEN: Me and my brother are super close. He always has me in the gym and has me super humble and kept my mind right and able to play. To be honest, Coach Hamilton loves it more than I do. When he comes to school, he comes up and watches games. It's just a special connection, special relationship.

**Q. When you look back at the former guys at FSU who were longer, who could go and be versatile defenders, John Butler Jr., Quincy Ballard, how do you think you can help this team going forward, and how can you kind of use your skill sets to benefit and help what Leonard Hamilton is trying to do with this team?**

TAYLOR BOL BOWEN: My versatility is a big reason why I came to Florida State. I remember on my visit going to Coach Ham's office and watching the tape of the older guys like the Jonathan Isaacs and all the names that you mentioned. I was always a big fan of how they played and how they used their versatility effectively.

I always saw myself in a similar light that I saw them in, and I wanted do the same things they did.

**Q. You said that Coach loves your brother more than you do, but bring me into that relationship that you have with Coach and why he is the right leader to lead you collegiately and get the best out of you.**

TAYLOR BOL BOWEN: Coach Ham and the rest of the coaching staff have definitely grown me up a lot. My freshman year, you could see it throughout the years. I just kept making strides and jumps and leaps and bounds.

The coaches are really the main reason for that getting up in their office watching film and telling me I should do this instead of doing that, and me and Coach Ham have a great relationship. He has grown me up a lot as a young man first and basketball player second.

That's the No. 1 thing I can say about the program as a whole is they really do a good job developing you as a person and as player. Coach Ham has been instrumental in that.

THE MODERATOR: You've been described as an underrated player as a freshman in the ACC. How is it you're going to show the world what you really have got?

TAYLOR BOL BOWEN: The lights are coming on soon, man. Only time will tell. I'm excited. I'm excited.

I think that you guys will see a lot of good play from myself and my teammates. Like I said, the lights are coming on

soon.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Florida State, good luck this season.

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