

Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Washington, D.C., USA

Capital One Arena

Florida State Seminoles Coach Leonard Hamilton Jalen Warley Jamir Watkins

Postgame Press Conference



Florida State 86, Virginia Tech 76.

LEONARD HAMILTON: Virginia Tech, they've always been an extremely talented team because they execute so well. They have a great combination of basketball savvy players, but they have the ability to shoot the ball well from the perimeter, and they amaze you with their ability to take the ball to the basket and finish. So they kind of challenged us from a defensive standpoint on all levels.

We're very fortunate to win at our place, and we lost at their place because they're just an extremely sound team.

Our team, I thought the difference in the game was that we competed well on the boards. I thought that we attacked the basket. Obviously that has been one of the strengths of our team, able to get the ball and attack the interior, and I thought our guys gave a good effort the entire game.

We had some plays where they just executed very well, and we got -- we didn't get the stops we wanted, but I think our effort was good and our focus was good, and hopefully we can carry that over into our next game.

Q. You look at the turnovers you guys were able to force today. How much did you think that led to the outcome, and how much did that help Jamir get into a flow of things?

LEONARD HAMILTON: Well, there's no doubt that we base our defensive philosophy on deflections and steals and turnovers.

In order to be effective, you have to play with your hands,

and you've got to keep your hands up, and that's what we emphasized all week long, containing the dribble and being active with our hands.

They do such a good job of executing their offense, we just kind of wanted to take away as much vision as we could and get our hand on the passing line and make them catch the ball a little farther out than they normally do.

At the end, obviously the free throws that we were able to make down the stretch I thought was huge.

Q. Coach, in your two losses to the Tar Heels this year, you held second half leads in both games. You've proven you can play with the best, what will it take to beat the best?

LEONARD HAMILTON: Well, obviously we got to be - the game is 40 minutes, and we were up 14 I think in the second half on the road in Chapel Hill, and we were up I think eight or nine with about nine minutes to go at our place.

But the game is 40 minutes, and we played 30 each game, so hopefully we can play 40 minutes, a complete game this time.

Q. Leonard, Virginia Tech is one of the better if not one of the best perimeter shooting teams in the league. They shoot 64 percent in the first half, 36 percent in the second half. Is that just hands up on defense? What was causing that?

LEONARD HAMILTON: I think it was a little bit of both. I think that we contested shots better in the second half, and we contained the dribble better in the second half.

First half they was blowing by us like the wind. The second half I thought we did a much better job containing the dribble and getting our hands up and contesting shots. That's normally a pretty good formula.

Then I thought we got some offensive rebounds and got some put-backs, too, that helped us a little bit on the other end.



Q. Jamir, 34 points, great game from you. What were you seeing from Virginia Tech that allowed you to attack and have such a great offensive game?

JAMIR WATKINS: Early I thought that they was early in the gaps three four side singing the ball got downhill and opened up all the gaps for us, and we was able to score.

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