

NCAA Men's 1st and 2nd

Rounds: Orlando

Friday, March 17, 2017

Orlando, Florida



Leonard Hamilton

Jonathan Isaac

Florida State Seminoles

Florida State - 86, Florida Gulf Coast - 80

THE MODERATOR: It's late. We'll try to be quick. An opening comment from Coach Hamilton and then right to questions.

LEONARD HAMILTON: I thought both teams played very hard. I thought we both kind of got after each other with a lot of effort. We had a little run there where we had about five or six stops in a row, and we were able to get some separation. We're very fortunate to hang on for the victory.

Q. Leonard, a game like this where it's kind of back and forth and you're up and they get close, what do you tell your team about keeping composure and not letting this moment get to them?

LEONARD HAMILTON: Obviously, when we hit our free throws, we don't have an issue. We didn't shoot free throws very well down the stretch, and if you don't knock those free throws down, you can put yourself in a position where this stuff can happen. It makes everything look bad.

Q. Coach, it seemed like obviously you've got a team full of guys who have never really been on this stage before. Every time they mounted some sort of run to make it closer, either Isaac or Bacon, all of those guys seemed to have an answer. What does it tell you about those players that they're comfortable doing that in the NCAA Tournament?

LEONARD HAMILTON: We had a lot of anxious moments. I thought at the beginning of the game everybody had that kind of nervous exhaustion, so to speak. Everybody went in the game. After two or three possessions down the court, it was like they were stepping in mud. That's part of being in this stage. Hopefully, we'll be a little more relaxed as we move on in this game.

Q. Jonathan, can you talk about the athleticism that your team has. This is Dunk City, but you guys were 9-2 in that department tonight. It seems like you guys had a little too much athleticism for them.

JONATHAN ISAAC: They're Dunk City, but I think our

team leads the nation in dunks. That's what we do. We're long and athletic, and we dunk the ball, too.

Q. Coach, congratulations. Obviously, it's very, very soon after your victory, but I'm wondering if you have any thoughts on the Xavier matchup. Do you have any familiarity with the team?

LEONARD HAMILTON: I think you have to give me at least a little time to go back and evaluate that.

Q. Fair enough.

LEONARD HAMILTON: Thank you very much.

Q. Jonathan, this is for you: I mean, do you always warm up with dunks? I mean, you seemed to have a lot of dunks warming up tonight. Was there a message there?

JONATHAN ISAAC: You mean in the warmup?

Q. Yeah.

JONATHAN ISAAC: No, that's just how we all warm up, try to get our legs ready to go.

Q. Leonard, Dwayne made some big shots for you there late in the first half to kind of right the ship. How big was that for you guys to get those baskets from Dwayne?

LEONARD HAMILTON: Well, it's obviously that he's been our go-to guy all year. They mixed their defenses up, man-to-man and zone. Our players were aggressively trying to get him the ball in areas where we thought that he could give us some offensive productivity.

He was very anxious. I thought he was very efficient the first half. He was under control. He made good decisions with the ball, and we're going to need more of that for him as we move through the remainder of the Tournament.

Q. Leonard, as far as Dwayne's concerned, keeping with Dwayne, he came in tonight averaging 19 points in his last four games; tonight he gets 25. What is it you've seen out of him lately where he's been more aggressive and taking those shots and carrying the team at times?

LEONARD HAMILTON: I think we're a little more efficient as a team. We're not quite there yet, even this

late in the season. We have not been as efficient through the whole year as I'd like to. We have a lot of young guys that I thought when we went in the game the first half, I thought we had a tremendous amount of energy, but I didn't think we executed very well.

I think our veterans, the guys that have been playing the most together, they recognize now how to get the ball in to Jonathan, and we're making better decisions in terms of finding the sweet spots where we can score.

Q. Coach, talk about the growth of Jonathan from day one until this very moment right now.

LEONARD HAMILTON: Well, Jonathan came into our program with tremendous high basketball IQ, and he values all the intangible things that sometimes it takes years to develop. He makes good decisions with the ball. He doesn't force anything. He loves playing defense. He's a good rebounder, and he doesn't force any shots. So those things he brought to the table. I'd like to take credit for teaching him some of that, but he has an instinctive feel for the game I think's very good.

We've allowed him to be who he is and allowed him to grow within the abilities he has, and I still think his best basketball is ahead of him.

Q. Jonathan, you were talking about earlier in the season how you wanted this team to be the culture change of FSU. First victory in the NCAA Tournament since 2012. Do you feel like this is the first step in that Florida State culture change?

JONATHAN ISAAC: I think we took that first step a long time ago. When we first got together, we talked about changing the culture and changing what Florida State is about. This is just the back end of what we've done, getting to the Tournament and being able to win a game.

THE MODERATOR: Coach and Jonathan, thank you very much.