

Big Ten Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 10, 2023

Chicago, Illinois, USA

United Center

Indiana Hoosiers

Mike Woodson

Trayce Jackson-Davis

Jalen Hood-Schifino

Malik Reneau

Postgame Press Conference

Indiana - 70, Maryland - 60

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by the Indiana Hoosiers, head coach Mike Woodson, Trayce Jackson-Davis, Jalen Hood-Schifino, and Malik Reneau.

MIKE WOODSON: It's good to be back. I thought tonight, you got to give them credit. They played hard. They beat us early in the season.

But I thought the second half was the difference. We came out and established ourselves defensively, finally rebounded with them, and was able to come out of this with the win.

Q. Following up on that, just what was different particularly at the defensive end for you guys those last maybe 12, 15 minutes of the game?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: I just think that we really just got into them, started at half-court. We pressured on the ball. Guards did a really good job setting stuff up. We were trying to get them away from the baseline. Going towards the baseline, we wanted everything middle, sending everything back middle, and I thought we did a really good job on that.

Honestly, we were just staying in front of guys. Especially Jahmir Young. He got his for the most part, but I thought we did a really good job on him. Same with Donta Scott. His back-downs and post-ups, we were challenging shots and doing an excellent job of hitting as well.

Q. Malik, your thoughts. Your game tonight, you were



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really productive. Why do you think you were so effective tonight?

MALIK RENEAU: Just being able to come off the bench and be a spark plug for my team. Knowing when I'm in there, just being able to help out on the defensive side. And on the offensive side, just relieving the stress off the guys, especially Trayce and Race, and just going in there and rebounding too.

Q. Malik, obviously earlier in the season you were a little more prone to fouling defensively. Tonight with Race in foul trouble, you were really able to play effective defense without fouling. How have you been able to improve at defending without fouling?

MALIK RENEAU: Just trusting Coach, being able to trust me on the court too, and my teammates giving me that confidence to play how I want to play. Just being tough and not letting the other team score.

Q. Trayce, how much of your performance on both sides tonight was just the comfort you have in this environment that is the Big Ten Tournament and that you've done it so many times?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: Honestly, I felt in the first half I didn't play well, playing up to my standard that I should have been. I thought I was sluggish to start, and I think that had to do with the travel and just not playing for four days because you've got the Big Ten schedule, we're playing every three days and always on the go.

Having that time off, I felt like we had to get our legs under us. After we did in the second half, I thought we played really well. We were making good plays, hitting shots, and doing stuff of that nature.

Q. Trayce, you guys have been behind in the second half in a lot of games this year and come back and gotten victories, something that certainly didn't happen that much during your first three years. You're getting a lot of good plays from everybody too. Obviously these guys aren't freshmen anymore, but to get back through second halves like you guys have



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lately, how good does that feel just to be the type of team that closes out games?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: Yeah, you're right. We did have a problem with that in the past, but just what we've been doing now, what we've been doing lately and the fight from this team, everyone's on the same page, everyone's engaging. We came here for one reason, that's to win a championship, and I think everybody understands that. We're going to play as hard as we can to get that done.

Q. Malik, you've played with Jalen the longest of anybody on the roster. When did you first see him kind of develop the poise that he has in big-time moments?

MALIK RENEAU: From day one, when we first got to Montverde, me and him were teammates, and we developed just practicing against all the big-time players we had on the Montverde team. So we just developed the habit of becoming a winner and to always leave it out on the court every time we play.

Q. Jalen, Tom spoke to it a little bit with his question, but can you speak to the poise offensively that you guys had to have as well to get back into the game after some on again/off again first half, to get back into it in the second half?

JALEN HOOD-SCHIFINO: We knew it was going to be a tough game. Obviously it's the Big Ten Tournament, and it's going to be close games, games of runs. For us, we just had to stay poised offensively and defensively. I feel like we played a good game tonight. We were able to get the ball inside to Trayce and Malik. They were able to work. Guys hit big shots, and I was able to get to my spot. Overall, we played a solid game.

Q. For any of you guys, talk about the boost that Miller provided with that three-pointer from the baseline in the early stages of the second half, to not only get you guys going, but the fans going on a Friday night.

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: Absolutely. Miller is huge for our team. Not only does he hit big shots, but at the same time he's also playing as hard as he can on the defensive end of the floor, and I think that's something he doesn't get enough credit for.

Honestly, I'm always wanting him to shoot. Our team is always wanting him to shoot. Coach Woodson yells at him every day he needs to shoot the ball more, so he's trying to get them up.

Q. Malik, what is it like to guard Trayce in practice?

MALIK RENEAU: It's tough. Just knowing that he's an All-American. He got a variety of moves, and he just goes hard every time he plays.

Q. Trayce, you guys get a chance to play Penn State. Obviously you're going to remember that game after they shot 18 threes. What do you got to do different? What do you need to do different tomorrow so that doesn't happen again?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: We've just got to listen to Coach Woodson and our defensive philosophy. We know what we need to do in order to be in the game. We've just got to be able to guard the three-point line and stay in front of them on drives.

Q. Trayce, when Malik's playing like that in the paint, how much pressure does that take off you when he's getting the offensive rebounds, putbacks, things like that?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: Absolutely. I think me and Malik complement each other very well. When he's playing his game, I'm just watching him, like he's a freshman but he's doing his thing out there.

Props to him because sometimes it's hard coming off the bench, especially you're cold, but he comes off, and like you said, he gives us a spark. We needed it a lot tonight.

Q. For Jalen, can you just take us through that three-pointer you hit right at the end there and just how that play developed in your mind and what was going through your mind as that play developed.

JALEN HOOD-SCHIFINO: Race got the rebound, and when he passed it to me, I looked at the clock, and it was obviously ticking down. So I knew I had to get a shot up. Just instinct, and I hit a little stepback and hit the three, so it was good.

Q. Trayce, having been here for so long, having done this, played so many games at so many different places, what does that mean for the fan base to travel as well as it does? Because they were well represented in the stands tonight.

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: I believe we have the best fans in the country, and it just shows. It felt like a home game out there, and it got super loud.

We love playing for them. We love our Hoosier nation, and we've just got to keep grinding and keep doing our thing and taking it one game at a time.



Q. Mike, defensively in the second half, after Maryland took the seven-point lead, they only scored two shots at the rim for the rest of the game. Can you speak to the interior defense but also the defense on the perimeter because it just didn't look like they had many options to even get it inside.

MIKE WOODSON: I thought our switching was right on par, and we were able, like Trayce said, we were able to keep people in front of us. The pick-and-rolls didn't really hurt us because we were up on the picks.

Then Trayce just dominated inside, in terms of things that were coming to the rim, he made some big-time blocks and altered some shots. And then we were able to rebound with this team. That was the big key I thought.

Q. It's simplistic, but how much does it help, essentially, when you've got two guys in Jalen and Trayce that a team knows, if things are kind of going against them in a two, three-minute stretch, they can just feed that guy. He can get them established offensively. He can get you a bucket, maybe two, maybe three, and just kind of get you back on your feet again.

MIKE WOODSON: It's good to have that. I've never wanted a team where you just had to rely -- I think everybody that played tonight played a major role in us winning. Fortunately for us, we do have Trayce, and Jalen has been playing at a high level as well.

I think it's nice if you can get a third or fourth guy in to release some of the pressure, it will help us in the long run. I thought Miller played extremely well, and Malik came off the bench and gave us something tonight. Tamar hit a couple of big shots.

So I mean, it was a total team effort, and we're going to need that as we continue this journey.

Q. Especially with Race in foul trouble there, how important was what you were getting off the bench from Malik tonight?

MIKE WOODSON: It was very important. I tried Geronimo a little bit, but I thought Malik, being a freshman, he played up. I was proud of him. He did a lot of wonderful things. I've got to get him where he's finishing. He missed a lot of chippies around the bucket.

Being that big and having the body he has, he's got to finish those.

Q. How have you seen Tamar develop defensively since he got here at IU?

MIKE WOODSON: He's gotten better. There's no question he's gotten better from last season, and I thought tonight it was tough matchups because we switch.

And Young, everybody was playing Young. I thought we did a nice job of keeping him in front of us. I thought, when we played them out in Maryland, they had their way getting downhill against our ball club, and I thought we were a lot better in that department.

Q. On Malik, one point in time I think he had 8 points, 10 rebounds in 14 minutes. Why was he so impactful tonight for you guys?

MIKE WOODSON: He's big enough to do that. He should do that every time we put him in there.

No, I thought he had a good game going. He wasn't in foul trouble where he has to sit over next to me. So they let him play a little bit tonight, and we reaped the benefits from it.

Q. I asked Trayce this question, but you guys have just won a lot of games in second halves this year where you've been behind. What's that say about the mentality of these guys and just getting used to what they're doing to play the full 40 minutes and close games out?

MIKE WOODSON: I didn't know we won a lot of games behind in the second. There are a lot of games we were up too. It's been back and forth.

I just think these guys are committed, man. They have that no-quit mentality, and that's the kind of team that you want.

It's easy to get down and then throw in the towel and say, hey, we'll get the next one, but this team hasn't been that way. We've just got to continue to take it a game at a time and see where it leads us.

Q. You guys only scored 55 points at Maryland when you played them out there. Their press seemed to take you out of your rhythm. How do you feel like you guys did against the press?

MIKE WOODSON: I thought with did extremely well. We've changed up some things in terms of our press offense. But defensively out there, I thought they scored 66 points, I believe, and that's where you want to be when you play on these teams, 60 to 62, 63 points.

So I thought our defense was solid, but offensively we just didn't have nothing going, and we put them on the free-throw line a lot in that game in Maryland. But tonight I thought was solid. The second half, our defense was really, really good.

Hopefully, when we step foot in here, we're ready to go.

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Q. Alongside Trayce's 24 points, he also had 7 assists. Can you talk about his ability to play make as a center of this team?

MIKE WOODSON: Again, we've put all of our bigs in that position to be able to be playmakers. It's something that I -- from the very beginning, I did in the pros as a coach, allow centers or power forwards to be playmakers. You see Trayce now, he rebounds the ball. He pushes it up the floor and initiates our break.

I don't want robots. I want guys that feel good about what they do when they're out there on the floor, and Trayce is a prime example. He's having a wonderful season.

Q. Mike, what is it about Jalen's poise? You've been around the game a lot, but he's a freshman. What is it about his poise that allows you to trust him in those big games?

MIKE WOODSON: It's something I saw in high school, and high school is not college. Once he got here, you could see how he approached things on and off the floor, his demeanor. It's been a nice carryover from high school to college.

He's still growing. He has still a ways to go, but the fact that nobody says anything -- us losing Xavier Johnson was huge, and it just threw him right to the wolves basically. He had to grow up awfully fast.

And in doing that, he's been great for us, man. He's done a lot of great things for us to put us in this position. But make no mistake about it, it's been a total team effort in the guys that have played.

Q. You guys just beat a Maryland team that beat you back in January. You're facing Penn State tomorrow, who also beat you earlier in the season. Is there a sense, in your guys' mind, your guys' locker room, of getting that back at these teams now that you've got a chance to play them again?

MIKE WOODSON: The thing is it's playing out that way. Penn State has put themselves in position, just like we have. Now we've got to play tomorrow at 2:30. We'll go back and break down tape and start preparing for them tonight and get up in the morning and do some more work.

