

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Scott Dolson

Mike Woodson

Press Conference



SCOTT DOLSON: First, I would like to thank everyone for being here today. It's a great day for Indiana basketball. But first, I want to start by talking about women's basketball because I want to wish Teri Moren and our women's team all the best with the big game tonight. I'm leaving here early this afternoon to head down to San Antonio and couldn't be more thrilled and more proud of our team. When we made the decision to make the change in men's basketball, it was the same day as the women's selection show and I went to visit the selection program with the team and I talked to Coach Moren, I apologized to her because I did not want the selection process to take anything away from the great things that are happening with women's basketball. She's just been fantastic, can't thank her enough. We stay in close contact, she set up a Zoom call for me to talk to the team this past Friday night before the Sweet Sixteen game. I told Heidi, my wife, afterwards it was so incredible. Coach Moren thanked me but it was more meaningful I think to me than it was to the team. I know Hoosier Nation is down in San Antonio and we want our women's team to know how much we're behind them for the game tonight.

Before I start today with the great news about our men's program, I do want to say some special thank-yous. This is really, really important to me that I thank some special people, they are really invaluable in this process, President McRobbie who has just been an incredibly supportive. Just can't thank him enough. I know he's got a million things on his plate. He answered every call I had throughout these last two weeks and made me feel like he was -- I was his number one priority and has always asked incredible questions, and just the collaborative process with him was terrific and just want to thank him so much for his support.

Thank the board of the trustees. I'm a better leader having the opportunity to work so closely with Quinn Buckner. Just want him to know how much I appreciate that.

I want to thank my wife, Heidi. Throughout this process, I holed myself up in the basement of our house and she

brought meals down to me regularly, and would always say that "when this is over you don't think this is going to continue. This is it. This is it for the wait service."

But she was my rock and I appreciate that and just thank my kids, as well. We've got five kids and not one single -- we have three birthdays during this process with five kids, they all go from 21 up to 28 and not one time did any of our kids ask me one question about any candidate or who is on the list. And even our youngest who is a junior here at IU; that just impressed me so much that they just get it and they just want to be supportive and they love IU like we do and just want to thank them.

There's two members of our members senior administrative team -- all of our senior administrative team in athletics have been huge but two members I would particularly single out, deputy AD Stephen Harper, and senior associate AD for sport administration, Becky Pany, who throughout this process has worked tirelessly the last two weeks, and actually before that.

And I hate to highlight them because I don't want anybody to try to steal them from us but they have been fantastic and there's others, but Mattie White our deputy AD down in San Antonio holding down the fort with women's basketball. Lorian Price, our senior associate AD for academics who has been incredible in this transition process in leading the transition team.

And then finally we created a vision document, and this whole thing today is about the vision for IU Basketball, the future and after we made the change we created a document that really spelled out that vision and we had two staff members, Ali Ricker and John Decker, on vacation, worked tirelessly for two days to turn around a document that was a vision that we created that would have taken a month at least.

It's all about team and that's a theme you're going to hear the more I talk today. I didn't use a search committee as you know but I relied on just so many experts that I talked to, experts in the NBA from owners to general managers to scouts, experts in college, coaches, athletic directors, commissioners. They know who they are and there's some



names, and I'll keep that confidential out of respect for them and the process, but they know who they are, and I just want them to know, I just can't thank them enough for the time they took to really help me walk through this process and do the deep dive and due diligence I wanted to do.

There's some names on there that would probably surprise people how much time they put in. The NBA trade deadline was going on during this process, and I had people that were so heavily involved in that that took literally large amounts of time through this process and give me great advice.

I want to mention Fred Glass and thank Fred, our former athletic director, one of my mentors told me from the start he did not want to know one candidate, that was our deal but he wanted to be there to support me and sent me message after message just of support always and having him as a rock means the world to me.

I want to thank our fans. Our fans are resilient, they are passionate, supportive and I want our fans to know we all want the same things and I hope they know how much we appreciate that. I want to thank our former players and managers. I cannot tell you the support, messages. I am so behind on text messages right now, it's embarrassing. But I want them to know that from my deepest of my heart I appreciate their support and their love for this program.

And then finally and most importantly I want to thank our current players. Our current players as I said two weeks ago, change is hard and the fear of the unknown is hard. But our former players handled this -- couldn't have handled it any better.

And I'll say this: They were resilient and they were so helpful. I've had two Zoom meetings in the last two weeks with the full team and several one-off conversations and really they helped me in this process and gave me ideas of characteristics that were important to them.

And I give Archie Miller a ton of credit in terms of the quality of young men we have, the character, and just who is in that locker room. I just want our current players to know how much I appreciate that.

So moving forward, the first thing I would do is welcome Thad Matta, Thad and Barbara and his girls to the program, and just quickly mention really the vision for that and really the partnership with Thad really came about after my first meeting with Coach Woodson.

Coach Woodson and I had an incredible first meeting and we talked about the vision to the program and how to

bridge the past to the to the future, and one of the things he said to me that struck me is he's a collaborator. One of the things that's important to him is putting great people around him and he said, "Scott, you and I will be joined at the hip. If we do this, this is a partnership."

And it actually was music to my ears because that's what I was looking for, not for me to micromanage the program, but this needs to be a unified effort and it was really, really foreign to him.

As I moved forward in the process after several meetings, I realized that I'm joined at the hip with a lot of our coaches and for me to put all my resources although obviously basketball is so critical to us, that I needed some people and at the same time, Coach Woodson was asking me for resources around him.

So I actually came to him, went to Thad and thought there was a perfect maybe marriage there for Thad to help me on the need I had to make certain I had the resources with basketball.

Coach Woodson mentioned to me he had a partnership with Glen Grunwald with the Knicks as a head coach and it was incredible to have a resource to bounce things off of and I felt like this could be a perfect fit so it worked out great and the rest is history.

But I'll say this: Mike Woodson is 100 percent the head coach. He reports to me. He's the final decision-maker based on my final approval of basketball decisions.

Thad reports to me and is a key resource for me and for Mike and really can't thank him enough for being part of our program.

Having said all will that I'm excited to get to the main agenda item right now is that I'm just so excited to make the introduction I'm getting ready to make. I said two weeks ago, that we were going to build on our foundation. It was really important that -- we have a celebrated history, but the most important thing is we have a vision for the future and the plan was to focus on the vision for the future.

Ultimately there were three reasons -- and I can summarize it in three things. The first thing is I feel that coach -- why I ended up, which I feel to me was the perfect choice, and I can summarize it in three things.

The first thing is, is that I feel that Coach Woodson was a perfect fit as a person, and I'm talking -- I've talked to the people -- the people I talked to had no idea who I was leaning towards, who was in the mix, not -- but I'm talking about people all across basketball, all across, to a person,

they said there's no better person than Mike Woodson as a person and had a meant a lot. I had someone I really, really respect in basketball say to me, we need someone that's a normal person, we need him to fit in and collaborate and be part of a team. I can't tell you how many people told me how many people told me about Mike and what Mike stood for. I knew Mike but not great just acquaintances from being around here.

The second thing is as I did my deep dive, Mike is known as a visionary. Mike is an X's and O's guy. Mike in the NBA and circles of people at the highest level that I talked to talked about his visionary pick-and-roll defense that I started in Atlanta that became the normal way for defenses to play moving forward; for his visionary offense, his one-in and four-out, and I'm talking about people not advocating for Mike and had no idea where I was in the search and who talked about there's no better mind in the NBA than Mike Woodson and it hit me as we were looking for the future, that was very important.

The final piece, obviously the most important, I wanted a partner who shared the same vision and passion and plan moving forward, because I think it's all about the plan. It was clear that Mike was the right choice. He checked those boxes among all others. So with saying all that, I just I can't tell you how excited how I am, to announce to all of you and Hoosier Nation today, the next head basketball coach at Indiana University, Mike Woodson.

MIKE WOODSON: Thanks for coming out. Before I even open the floor up for questions, there are so many people that I want to acknowledge for me being here today.

Coach Bob Knight who means so much to Indiana Basketball, and he took a chance on a kid out of Indianapolis many years ago to come here and play basketball.

And it was a journey for Mike Woodson. And coming to Indiana University to play basketball, he taught me how to play the game of basketball from a fundamental standpoint. He taught me how to be a man on and off the floor. And that was huge for me coming out of the inner cities of Indianapolis.

So I pay tribute to Coach Knight in the utmost way because Indiana Basketball will always be Bob Knight. Will always be. It was great he came back in February a year ago and all the ex-players that surrounded him, the fans, it was a beautiful, beautiful thing. So Karen, Coach, I love you guys and for me this is a complete circle. I've done pretty much everything that I wanted to do in basketball. I never dreamed of playing professionally. You don't go in to college, particularly at that particular time, that you're

thinking that you're going to play professional basketball. And I was just trying to get an education, which I promised my mother and sisters and brothers, and I got that, and was able to get drafted in the NBA and fortunate enough to have played 11 years.

It all worked hand-in-hand in making my decision to come to Indiana University, and then I got into this crazy game of coaching, and you know, I have a lot of people to thank for that: Cotton Fitzsimmons, who was one of my early mentors in my early days as a pro player, was the guy who summoned me to come to Phoenix and start coaching and from that day on it, took off for me. The juices started to flow and I just felt after I left the game of playing, I had something to offer some young kid as a coach on and off the floor. Because I like to think the years that I played here at Indiana University, Coach Knight did something right because I turned out just fine.

So in that regard, I felt I had something to give back and I was able to do that over the years of coaching. I was an assistant coach for about eight years and got my big break as a head coach after winning an NBA title with the great Larry Brown in Detroit. It's been a nice run in the NBA.

But to be able to circle back and come back home and coach Indiana University Basketball means a great deal to me. It's never been about me as a person. I do what I do because I have a beautiful wife and two daughters who allowed me over the years to do what I do.

And Terri, Alexis, Mariah, unbelievable people. I mean, they are the rock that I stand on. So for me to come back here to be in front of all my fans and family and friends, I mean, it's amazing. You know, I never dreamed that this would ever happen to me.

But I'm here, and I have so many other people to thank: President McRobbie, Scott for taking the time to fly in. I know he had called me and said he wanted to speak with me, and he wanted to do a Zoom. And I told him, I said, if you're interested in Mike Woodson, either I get on a plane or you get on a plane and you come see me. And he said, "I'll be there tomorrow morning," the next day.

It was I thought a great interview in terms of getting to know one another. Didn't know if I was going to get the job. But I felt good about my position and what I had presented in terms of helping to move the needle here at Indiana University. So Scott, I thank you for making that trip to see me. Indiana University.

There are people here today that I'd like to thank before we get really into this and that's my family members that are here: Scott, Quinn, can't say enough, brother. You guys

have been in my corner for many, many years and I thank you.

Wayne Junior Radford is here today and I know his dad is very happy today. Wayne, thanks for coming, brother. I want to thank my Knick family for allowing me to get out of my contract and come on.

Jim Dolan gets a bad rap in New York. But he was a great owner for me. He allowed me to head coach and he allowed me to come back and be an assistant. I have him to thank, Leon West, Scott Perry, and Tom Thibodeau, what a great coach, his beautiful staff that they have assembled in New York has allowed me to do what I do now, and be able to come back and be a coach here at Indiana University. They didn't have to do that but they did. So I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

Miss D and all the front office and medical and trainers, everybody in that Knick organization is first class and I have them to thank for me standing here today, so thank you.

I'd like to thank the Ferguson family, Steve and his whole family because he's been a major mentor in my life; the Cook family, Bill who is no longer with us, known him for many, many years, and he was one of my early mentors, he and Gayle Cook and Carl, just a beautiful family.

Anitra House, I know if you're listening, boy, you were very instrumental in me getting through school. Want to thank you.

Nancy Cross who lives here in town, I know she's happy that I'm back.

Bob Hammel. We go a long way back.

I said I wasn't going to get sensitive, but boy, this is a great day for Mike Woodson and his family, and it's a great day for the fans and Hoosier Nation, I think. Because it's going to be my job to bridge the gap between young people who don't know who coach Woodson is and the old timers who don't know who I am. I'm going to bring all the old-timers back like the old days, and we going to bridge the gap between old and new. At the end of the day, it's about two people or two things, and that's the fans and our basketball program and our players. Our players will be first and foremost. I spoke to the guys last night, and I think they understand who Coach Woodson is early on because I've told them that this whole program is going to be about family.

And being about family, there's a lot of things that comes with that. You know, they are looking for me to get them

where they need to go, and I'm looking at them to get Indiana Basketball where it needs to go, and that's going to be huge because I'm a coach that push and grab and I try to get the most out of my players. And that word "accountability" is so important when you look at players and you talk about coaching. I'm going to meet with each player individually today and see where their heart and mind are and talk about moving this program in the right direction, and that's getting it back on top. That's why I'm here. I'm excited about being here.

Scott, you just have no idea. This is a wonderful day. With that being said, and I'm sure I missed some people that I need to thank, but they know who they are. I appreciate all the support I've got over the years, and all the old-timers, the ex-players that played here, hey, I've gotten a lot of phone calls from you guys reaching out and trust me, time comes, I'll return the calls. But I appreciate the support, I really do.

With that said, I will hope the floor up for questions. So here we go.

Q. What do you think the biggest challenges are that you face?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, it's always been my goal, when I was doing my thing in the NBA as a head coach, I think the timing when the jobs opened up here were not in my favor because I had a job. I never really tried to pursue it but one time, and I didn't get the job and I went back to my NBA world where I remained until yesterday when Jim Dolan gave me the opportunity to get on a plane and come here for the job.

I've watched Indiana Basketball all my life from afar, even though the 30 years that I've spent, plus, in the NBA, I was always glued to Indiana Basketball. That never changed. It's a big part of my life.

So you know, we had our ups and downs over the years. I get that. But I've always been true to Indiana Basketball. So to be able to circle back and give it another shot and trying to come back as the head coach, this time I was able to get it done.

Q. Are you concerned about your lack of college basketball experience?

MIKE WOODSON: Not at all. To me basketball is basketball. Sure, I've never coached in college, but I'd like to think that I've coached at the highest level and I've coached some of the greatest players that's ever graced the basketball world.

The NBA family is a beautiful thing, guys. And I've been fortunate to be part of that for 30-plus years.

Yes, there are going to be some challenges, me coming back here to coach this great university and this basketball team. But at the end of the day, coaching is coaching. I've got to get players, go out and recruit quality student athletes that can come in here and help this program move in the right direction. I've got to groom these young men to be men on and off the floor. That's what it's all about. Somebody took a chance, like I said earlier on me, that I turned out just fine.

So there will be challenges, but I'm going to try to surround myself with people that can help me navigate some of the challenges.

But at the end of the day, I've got to put a product on the floor that Hoosier fans will love from a defensive standpoint and from an offensive standpoint in terms of winning basketball games. I've got to teach and develop players. That's the only way it's going to get done in terms of building a program to win.

Q. You mentioned bridging the gap. This will be the first time, if you were talking to a prospect right now, what would your message be?

MIKE WOODSON: It wouldn't be my first time recruiting, first time recruiting in college. We recruit all the time in the NBA. The one year I coached the Atlanta Hawks when I was given that job, I had the youngest team in the history of the game and they were all recruits from the college game where you had to go out and do background checks, medical checks, all kind of things in terms of bringing a player in that you think that can help build your program.

So we're not new to recruiting, free agency. You've got to go out and recruit. But we're recruiting younger people now and I get that. And I remember when Coach came in to recruit me, all those things come into play.

Yeah, I've been far removed from it, but I honestly believe I can go in a kid's home and be able to relate because of what I've gone through in my career. And I have a story to tell, I do. If that kid is willing to listen and he buys into my story, I think I can get him to come to Indiana University. Yeah, recruiting is hard because you have a lot of coaching out there trying to recruit the best talent to help their respective teams win basketball games. I'm going to be in that same pool, and I'm going to go out and try to do it the right way and we'll do it the right way, and we'll win the right way once I get quality kids here that I think can help us win basketball games.

Q. Do you have staff members in mind and what are you prioritizing with your assistant coach hires?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, yes, I have staff people in mind and I will sit down with Scott and Thad and assess some of the coaches. I'm getting all kind of calls from friends and coaches that want to come and help me, and I have my list of coaches that I think can help me.

So we will collaborate together and figure out what's good for Mike Woodson and the Indiana University program moving forward.

Coaching is important. I think you've got to put people around you that you trust. People around you that's willing to work hard. That's what I've done in my two stops as an NBA head coach. I try to put people that's going to work and be loyal and help me to develop young players that's going to be good basketball players and good people off the floor.

Q. Can you explain to everyone why it is important to have the former players at IU be part of the current program and how that impacts the current players?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, it impacts it in a huge way. All I can talk about is the days when Coach Knight was here and how you know, he had everybody come back every year, and that was a beautiful reunion, man. I miss those days. And I'm going to bring those days back because I think it's important. A lot of these old-timers, they probably look at me as an old-timer. We laid the groundwork for where we are today and those players should never, ever be forgotten and in my heart they won't ever be forgotten.

So I will bring them all back and bridge this gap that's so desperately needed why the young players and the young fan base that we do have, a lot of these young fan base, they don't know who I am and I get that. My daughters kind of remind me of that.

But at the end of the day, I've been chosen to be the coach here and I'm going to try to tie it all together to make it all work, and we all be one big family and win basketball games.

Q. What will your message be to the players as you sit down to them?

MIKE WOODSON: Moving forward, we have a few players that have entered the portal, players that I think can help us win basketball game games next season. My first job is to sit down with each one of them and talk about staying in Hoosier Nation. You know, that's what's important. And if I got to plead and beg a little bit to keep them here, I'm going

to do that.

But again they have got to make the final decision on what they want to do, but there's no better place in the country to play basketball I think. That's what I'm going to rely to them and let them know that I'm in their corner, that we're family. I'm always going to have an open-door policy where they can come in and talk to coach Woodson. I've never strayed from that over the years. There's a lot that I have to do once I leave this press conference in terms of sitting down with each individual player and having a pow-wow with them and see where their heart is.

Q. Did you know Thad well before this and what do you envision his role being with the program?

MIKE WOODSON: I've always watched Thad from afar. Thad has had major success in the Big Ten as a head coach, the 13 years he coached Ohio State, and I had my battles with Herb Williams who was a great Ohio State player and who worked for me in New York so we always go around about with one another during the Big Ten season. So yeah, I've watched Thad from afar. This is the first time I've had an opportunity to sit and talk with Thad.

Again, great basketball mind. My ego has always been in tact in terms of being able to accept great basketball minds and what they are thinking. I think that's healthy from a coaching standpoint and I think it can't do nothing but help me as I move up the road and try to build this basketball team. I'm grateful that Thad is on board. Again we have to put a staff together and we'll work towards that here in the next week or so.

Q. What vision do you have for the team and this program as far as style of play is concerned on offense and defense?

MIKE WOODSON: When I look at college basketball, a lot of it is they are taking things from our league now and their defense are switching defenses, a lot of zone, maybe three-quarter court or half-court or zone defenses.

Offensively, they are shooting a lot of threes like the NBA. So when I look at college basketball, and the fact that our game is starting to come this way in a major way, I think I can bring a system in that from a defensive standpoint where you know we can recruit players that are capable of playing three or four positions. That's kind of how I did it in the pros. Players that if you did switch defensively, you felt good about them. The players guarding the ball and players that are committed to rebounding the basketball.

I think when you build a defensive system, if everybody is connected together and work hard to defend not only the

ball but when there is a breakdown, and rebound the basketball as a unit, you put yourselves in position to win basketball games. The three-ball has changed the game, there's no doubt about that. We have got to recruit players that can shoot the ball and pass and dribble be able to make plays for one another.

And in doing that, I think I can create an offense that everybody touches the basketball and if you can shoot the basketball, then your expected to shoot it and make shots. If you can't shoot it, then you have to do other things to help us win basketball games. It's my job to go out and put the best team positive I will on the floor that can do those things.

But the style has changed, like I said, and it's a beautiful style. I don't think you can always just live on shooting threes, but it's great if you've got a team that can make it. We built a team in New York with Grunwald and Jim Dolan and myself where we brought in eight new players that season and all eight could shoot the three-ball and our core group was fabulous at shooting threes. We lead the league in threes taken, threes made and third in three-point percentage. That team ended up winning the division that year.

So the three-ball has changed the game and we have to find players that can make the three-ball, as well.

Q. Talk about adapting to talent year to year.

MIKE WOODSON: When I started off in Atlanta, I started off with 18-, 19-, 20-year-old men. I was realistic when I came into Atlanta because I just come off a title run in Detroit where we won an NBA title. I felt when I went to Atlanta that I could win an NBA tight that will year because I was on such a high and it just wasn't realistic but I never sold those players on not making the playoffs. When you look back at that team, Josh Smith, Josh Childers, Royal Ivey, Dante Smith, Stoudemire, these are all young babies, and that ownership was fortunate enough to stick with me. They gave me the resources and opportunity to build is that team and three years later we were in the playoffs playing the Boston Celtics to a Game 7 who ended up winning the NBA title that year.

You know, basketball is funny but we just got to keep pushing and pushing players to do the right thing on and off the floor.

Q. Can you talk about growing up in Indianapolis, your child, family, high school career?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, you know, I'm from a major, big family of 12 brothers and sisters. I lost my parents at a very

young age and I lost some siblings along the way.

But growing up in Indianapolis and playing the game of basketball, there just wasn't a place you couldn't go to get a basketball game in Indianapolis and the talent back then was just tremendous, man. I mean, I can go in every area of Indianapolis and play pick-up basketball game and play at a high level with great talent. I don't know fits still that way today but it was loaded back then.

And everybody who played basketball, they always had their eyes on Indiana University or Purdue or Notre Dame but I always had my eyes on Indiana University and the basketball program, because it was so powerful at that time and every year you new Indiana was in position to do something special. That's what I wanted to be a part of.

I remember my sixth grade teacher, which I couldn't afford at that time to go to Bob Knight's camp, pay for me to come down and I ended up winning a three-on-three contest that at Coach Knight's camp with two other kids and Coach gave me a tee shirt and told me he would follow me my senior year in high school and that's all I needed to hear. And I had a great senior year and he came knocking and I made a decision to come here and play basketball. It all started in Indianapolis growing up.

Q. How do you feel about the players you have inherited, do they fit the system that you want to play or do you want to craft a system to your players strengths?

MIKE WOODSON: I've watched a few games of the Hoosiers this year and they have had their ups and downs. I get it. The pandemic hasn't helped sort of their psyche and way of thinking in terms of college life here on campus. But I've got to assess after going back today and I'll go and watch more film, I've got to assess after speaking with these young men and get their feelings on this past season and what their thinking is on staying or they are leaving because some decisions have got to be made if they decide to leave. But I'm going to do my best, put my best foot forward to see that the guys I think can help us move forward in this program, that they stay on board.

But if not, then I've got to go to Plan B and probably go in the portal and try to find players that I think fits the system that can help us win basketball games here.

Q. NBA people have praised you for your player development skills with young guys in the league. Can you see that skill immediately helping you here at this level, too?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, it's going to have to help me

because I think when you get a younger player, there's so much that that young player has to be taught and that's on and off the floor. I harp on the off the floor thing so much because it goes hand-in-hand, academics and basketball, you can't separate them.

But the development program and the development of individual players is vital, I don't care what level it is and what sport it is. If you don't develop, you struggle, I think, and over the years, all the teams in the NBA that I've worked with, we've been able to develop great players, man. And it takes time, but if the player is willing to accept coaching, because it's demanding. I mean, it wasn't easy for me and I turned out just fine and I'm going to push guys and I'm going to be demanding; that they work, come to the gym and put the time in, and I think if they do that, good things will happen, and then in the long run, we will all benefit from it from a basketball standpoint.

Q. What was the process like for you? What was the first meeting like, you going to Mike, and what really connected you with Mike early on in this process?

SCOTT DOLSON: The process is probably not as complicated as a lot of people think. I mean, I really spent a great deal of time early on focusing on the vision that I mentioned earlier and at the same time creating a list of candidates that I thought of, candidates that were identified through people, liaisons, letting me know and working through that and then just lots and lots and lots of phone calls and due diligence with people I trust.

In the first meeting with Mike, I talked about it earlier, it was just clear the priorities I had identified in the vision for the program that he got it. There was immediate connection with us and one of the things that stood out is, again, the type of person that he is, the respect he has, but the collaboration because I'm a big believer from a leadership standpoint in team work and surrounding yourself with great people.

I say that about the staff I work with at our team, I say that about our other coaches and their staffs, and that's exactly what Mike was saying to me not even knowing that that was really critically important to me, and he said it earlier. There's no ego, it's not about Mike Woodson, and it's about a vision for the program and the future and building on our tradition of excellence, and so we hit it off right away and that meant a lot to me.

Q. How did you come up with the idea of a partnership between Mike Woodson and Thad and how but pick Thad as the partner?

SCOTT DOLSON: I was flying back on an airplane from



New York after our first visit and it struck me, I kept thinking about Mike and the success he had had and how he had partnered -- I kept thinking about Glen Grunwald, and I thought about my role in putting this team together.

And I had conversations with Thad, and Thad and I from the start as I talked to him, a lot of people don't know but Thad has an incredible passion for Indiana Basketball. Thad and I -- I'm two years older than Thad but we are both products of the 1976 team. He grew up an incredible fan, in fact, Scott Eales, a player on that team was from Hoopston, Illinois, that Thad grew up following Scott Eales and followed Indiana Basketball. He was at the game when Scott May broke his arm in 1975.

In my mind I started thinking about this team and really based on what Woody was asking me for and what he needed and then knowing in my conversations with Thad, his basketball mind, his knowledge of the business speaks for itself. I just started formulating this plan, again, in the next step as assistant coaches and so forth and so on but for us to do the things we want to do for the vision, it's about picking the right leader.

It all starts and stops with the head coach, and clearly Mike Woodson is the leader we need, but it's imperative on me to surround the head coach with the resources to make things happen and achieve our vision.

Thad to me was an absolute perfect fit and everything I said about Mike from a person in terms of the type of person he is, all the people I talked to across college basketball and the NBA, it's so interesting to me, even though their paths had crossed, they knew of each other obviously, the same qualities in Mike that appealed to me, the exact same qualities in Thad in terms of the type of person he is, the type of selfless leader, and a person that I could partner with and again knowing my responsibilities in the department have an administrator that can help me with this vision for Indiana Basketball.

Q. Can you talk about the first conversation with Mike and where it went from there?

SCOTT DOLSON: The first conversations with Mike, I flew to New York. As mentioned, I did a lot over Zoom. That's kind of commonplace. Like most people right now, a little Zoomed out, but we just had a terrific meeting. I look at it more as a conversation, and again for me, and I don't mean to be repetitive but it's all about the vision for the program for the future.

I talked to so many people but one of the things in hiring a former player that was really I think critical is you have to hire the right person first, the person that has the skillset,

the knowledge, with all those things that were important in our vision and if they happen to be a former player, that's a bonus.

But I was so impressed with everything, I talked to Mike about everything I learned and from talking to people and I like talking to people who had no idea who I really was interested, people that were just talking to me because they were interested in helping me and Indiana University. Mike hit all those qualities and was just reinforced with people that are at the highest levels of respect in the NBA and college basketball. I felt like again from that first meeting on we had a connection.

Q. What did you hear from Mike in terms of style of play that told you he would be a good fit and what did he say or do that convinced you he would be able to make the transition from the college game?

SCOTT DOLSON: The biggest thing -- and I grew up in basketball, so I like to talk, and I'm not a coach, and I told Mike, I remember, I don't want to pick the players we recruit. I don't want to be a micro manager, but at the same time I understand it to some level. It was just very interesting to me to talk to Mike about his vision, ways that he adapted to the teams he had, the ways he developed players, the ways we talked about the pick-and-roll defense and how big that is, and how really which is another important factor, how the college game has really migrated to the pro game.

And from a style of play, when I had the meetings I had with our current players, which I can't under score how important those meetings were. Our players talked about three things. They talked about relationship was really important to them. They talked about skill development and how that skill development can translate to the style of play we play but also translate to playing at the next level and the third thing they talked about was just a style of play overall and again in my meetings with Mike and talking to him, and then talking to several people as I said I highly respected across the NBA and college basketball, Mike it just really felt like it was a great fit for sure. He happens to be a great former player, which is nice, too.

Q. What did you think when Mike told you he needed that conversations to be in person? How quickly were you able to get on a plane? How much in that in-person interaction did you get a sense for what kind of person Mike is?

SCOTT DOLSON: It was fortunate to get things moving, and in this type of search, you have to be nimble. Again, I did lock myself in the basement and was on the phone pretty much nonstop but I felt like in talking to Mike that

that -- a greed with him and I was that interested and I felt that that was important.

And I flew down there and right away, it's interesting because you sometimes are around people, again, I've been around Mike, I'd say we're acquaintances because of my relationship with the basketball family, as a manager.

But there are certain people you're around that you feel like that you're old friends with and it's kind of hard to describe but you know it when you see it.

I'll say this: I felt the same thing with Thad, as well. You just feel like sometimes when people are cut from the same cloth. And people's -- I said this before. Your reputation -- my dad always said, your reputation is build on what you do, not what you say you're doing to do. Mike's reputation, from people who were not advocating for him for the job, they were going through a list of names that I was just running by to get what people thought; Mike's reputation was impeccable and I felt that and felt like we were old friends.

Again this is a partnership to move the program towards a future that we want to do, we all have to be together on this. It's a unified front and it building, again, to be repetitive but this is how I feel. We are building on this tradition but it's got to be a vision for the future and where basketball is headed and our recruits, when they look and think about Indiana Basketball, it's attractive because of what coach Woodson is doing and what he can thing to them for their individual skill development and what it does for our team success and what it does for basketball beyond, if that's their aspiration, which most of them it is.

Q. You talked about acknowledging past accomplishments but at the same time creating a modern tradition. What about Coach did you see as a good fit to blend the ideas to build a new tradition?

SCOTT DOLSON: There are things in the fabric in my view never changed and that was established a long time ago with Coach Knight.

Our players go to class. We care about the whole person. We do things right. We play by the rules and obviously we want to compete at the highest levels and those are things that are just in the foundation of the program, and you can see with our fans, one of the things that's always been interesting to me and something I take a great deal of pride in is that our fans get as excited about seeing a former player at a game or reading about a former player's success in life as much as they do about their success on the court and I love that part of Indiana Basketball. But at the same time, we've got to change and we've got to make

certain we have a vision moving forward, and so balancing that past and having that foundation to build on is huge, no one will ever convince me that it's a negative to have that incredible foundation. That doesn't put pressure, I don't think at all.

To me that's our springboard for the future. It's incumbent on me leading this department to make certain that I bring people together that can attract the student athletes that understand we're about the future and we have a vision for the future and that they understand that we understand what the future is of college basketball and also the professional level as well.

Q. How confident are you Mike will be able to be successful and what gives you the confidence?

SCOTT DOLSON: I'm 100 percent confidence and it's because recruiting is about relationships and trust, and relationships and trust, it's easy to say, and it's hard to kind of quantify it, but you flow it when you see it.

I will sleep great at night knowing that Mike Woodson is in the homes of recruits talking about not just basketball but talking about all the important qualities in trusting a young man to come play for this program, and I have got zero concerns from that area. I'll sleep well at night knowing that Mike Woodson is out there recruiting student athletes to come to Indiana University and play Indiana Basketball.