

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Coach Mike Woodson

Press Conference



Q. Hi, Mike. I'm curious, with June and July opening up in terms of recruiting, being able to have visits and a chance to go out and watch kids, I know you can't talk specifically about recruits, but when you prioritize this class, is there anything specific that you see from a positional standpoint moving forward that you really need to get out of the this '22 recruiting class?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, again, I think you try to go get the best players that fit what you are trying to do, and with the portal, you don't know from year to year who is going to stay and who is going to leave.

So I think you got to touch every position when you're talking about building your basketball team. I'm going to talk to some of the top point guards in the country, some of the top 2s and 3 wing guys, and some of the top 4s and 5s in the country. I think that's important when you're trying to build your program based on the portal. I don't know how long that's going to be around.

And I'll still recruit, but I know a lot of these players, they think, Well, are you going to recruit over me or on top of me. And I can't tell a kid that I'm not going to recruit on top of him. I'm going to try to recruit the best talent available that fits what I'm trying to do.

I think competition, and if you're any kind of competitor, that's how you get better as a ball club and as an individual player.

So, I mean, I've never ran away from competition. I just wanted to go play and try to make myself known. Those are the kinds of kids I'm trying to recruit here, but I'm trying to sit at the table with some of the top players.

Q. Looking ahead to your roster, a lot of changes. Curious about your thoughts with some of the recent additions about just the style of play and how maybe the pieces are going to fit to what you want to do?

MIKE WOODSON: Again, I'm going to try to play openly, offensively, and give a lot of players the latitude to do

things with the basketball until they prove me wrong.

And then defensively we are going to try to be a hard ass defense team where we get after people and get stops and then rebound the ball and go try to have fun offensively. That's kind of my mindset going in.

I know I get to start on the floor with these guys on the 9th, so I'm looking forward to that. On the 10th rather. I'm really looking forward to that, because, again, you never know what you got until you put them on the floor and start doing drills and giving them schemes and things of that nature on both ends of the floor.

My biggest hurdle I think is how quickly can they pick it up. You just don't know until you get out and start practicing.

Q. It's been couple of months now. Where do you feel from a comfort level standpoint of how well you're getting to know the kids, and not necessarily on the basketball floor, but just in person and how the interaction with them has been?

MIKE WOODSON: That's a good question. It's kind of hard when you can't actually sit down in a room and just talk with young men. My players that are here. You know, I make it a point when they come in to work, they got to stop by my office and see me first so we can chat and see how their day is going and what's going on in their lives. That's important to me. I think it helps me from a bonding standpoint even before we hit the floor running.

The new guys, I'm on the phone talking, watching their AAU games on the weekends and wishing them well throughout the week.

I know they had finals this past week coming up, so that's the only contact I've had. But a lot of these guys, I'll see them next month. They'll be in and then we'll start with our recruit official visits and unofficial visits that will come in and that will give me a chance to start bonding and talk to some of these guys in person.

Q. This is typically a time of year you're knee deep setting up the nonconference schedule. What can you



**tell us about what you got put together so far?
Generally what is your philosophy on the
nonconference schedule what you want that to look
like?**

MIKE WOODSON: I'm going to -- I'm not going to get too far ahead of myself, but I got to meet with the AD and sit down with those guys and actually see exactly where we are. That's going to happen probably next day or two, if not early part of next week, and just look at it.

My thing is I like to get a team in position first before we start chasing the big boys. I mean, I'm not afraid of competition. I want a team that's competitive, and if we can play, get back to play the Kentuckys and the Kansases and teams of that nature before we get on the big 10, I'm open for that.

But with this team going in early, I'm sure there is no -- you know, when these coaches talk about, I'm not that coach. You talk about, well, this a gimme. There is no gimmes in basketball. You got to come ready to play for 48 minutes. I'll never sell my team and players and coaches on, Hey, you got to respect your opponent and be ready to play when it's time to play regardless of who it is.

Q. Coach, you talked a little bit early on about wanting to add more shooting. How much do you think you addressed that with some of the late additions, and how much more do you need to go to get that ability to shoot the three pretty effectively?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, you know, I like everybody to be able to make the threes. I think Michael, the big center can make threes, to be honest with you. But I think Miller was a guy that we had to address, because I think he can play 2, 3, and 4 at his size. He possesses a weapon in being able to shoot the long ball.

I think Tamar Bates, until he gets here from AAU and watching him play, he's shown he can make it, but now you got to show me you can make it at the next level.

Xavier is more of a streaky guy. He is more in between the three-point line, and I didn't bring him in as a knock-down 3. So really to answer your question, I'm still searching in the future for guys that can make the long ball. We are going to work with Thompson as we go down the road because he's going to have an opportunity to step out and be in that position to make shots.

Same with Galloway and guys like that. Phinisee is streaky in his shooting, but these are things we all go to work on. This is our team as we move forward, and we are going to have to put the time in on the floor in terms of

shooting the ball.

Even from a free throw standpoint, because they just weren't a great free throw shooting team. All those areas got to be cleaned up if you're talking about competing big time in the Big Ten.

Q. I guess kind of speaking of shooting, I wanted to ask about what happened with Jerome Hunter. I know you had a statement, but can you tell us more about what led to his departure and what do you think it cost you losing another guy that is sort of a bigger wing that can shoot?

MIKE WOODSON: Again, I won't get deep into this because I like keeping stuff like that in house. He decided -- we decided to part ways and he landed on his feet in Xavier, so I'm excited about that. Talking about shooting, he was a guy that could make it but his percentage didn't show that.

We just didn't -- we didn't mix the way I think I wanted it to be between he and I. That's no knock against him. I think he's an excellent kid, and we decided to part ways. He understood. I understood. He left here and still landed on his feet at Xavier.

All I can wish him is nothing but the best, and we got to worry about the guys we have in Indiana uniforms as we go forward.

Q. How is the golf game? Quinn get you on the course Saturday?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, Quinn and I, we go back and forth. Scott and I and Dr. Rink, we don't even keep score. I didn't on Saturday. I mean, I'm trying to work on my game, which is awful right now, the little I do play. So it's all good.

Q. With what you have coming back, you talked about you only know about those guys because you can see them. You haven't been able to work with them. You know about what you have coming back and what you've seen coming in. Do you have an idea of planning for the future?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, again, it's hard to -- I'm going to be honest with you guys. With this portal it's hard to plan because you just don't know what player is going to be happy once the season is over with.

I'm hoping to make everybody happy. I know I can't play everybody big minutes and I don't know how deep I'll go this season until I get on the floor and put it together, but



guys like Phinisee and Galloway and Geronimo, these are guys that they got to get better. I got to push them to get better for us to be better. That's going to be important as we move forward.

And these new guys coming in, everything is new for them. They're going to be playing with different talents. So it's a matter of how quickly these guys are able to pick up things, because I'm going to throw -- not a lot of things at them like I would do at the NBA level. I got to slow walk it a little bit I think.

But I'm just interested to see how quickly they can adapt to what I'm trying to give them, and my staff. That's going to be important moving forward.

Q. Mike, couple small questions: What do you shoot? What did you shoot Saturday? What kind of golfer are you?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, when you're watching Tiger Woods you're basically watching me. You know, I'm below scratch player. Should have been on the PGA TOUR probably. No, I'm an awful player. (Laughter.)

I'll shoot anywhere from 85 to 100, but I have a good time.

Q. Now my real question: Why are you doing this today? I'm guessing it wasn't your idea; maybe it was. Why are you talking to us?

MIKE WOODSON: Because it's okay to talk to you guys. I mean, when I look back over my career as a coach and player in to the NBA, even when I was here in college, you are going to always have to deal with the media. I get it. You guys have a job to do and I have a job to do as well.

I've had run-ins with the media in some of my stops. It's a part of it. Sometimes I don't think it's fair some of the things that you read that are said about you, and then there are a lot of things that have been -- for the most part my walk of life with the media has been pretty damn good. I try to keep it that way.

But, again, I'm talking to you today because you guys got a job to do and I respect that. I really do. I just want you guys to respect what I do.

Q. Thank you, we do. Coach, I guess how much, especially as you have to start planning things like official visits, unofficial visits, mapping out the summer, just what's the synergy been like with the staff now that they've settled in the positions you want them in, and again there this kind of calendar to gear up for with things starting up again after COVID?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, we already got July and June calendar ready to go in terms of our visits and, you know, what we plan on doing moving forward. Now, I haven't had -- we been having coaching meetings trying to map out what I want to do and get my coaches more familiarized with what I'm doing.

We been watching film of last year's team and teams in the Big Ten, and then individual workouts in terms of where we break down the guys that played last year, their individual play, and how like a Phinisee might run a pick and roll. Trayce Davis' sweet spot, just a lot of things that I'm looking at in terms of trying to figure out who can do what and who can't do what and things we are going to have to teach moving forward.

It's a lot of work that has to be done, man, and I'm just anxious to get to June 10th where we can actually start working out.

Q. You talked quite a bit about what you like offensively, maybe four out and one in. You mentioned hard ass defense. Indiana's played this pack line over the last four years to mixed results. Can you explain what an Indiana team of yours that's playing well, what kind of defense will we be seeing?

MIKE WOODSON: First of all, I've seen this pack line. What is that?

Q. We don't know. No, it was meant to pack the lane, to stop driving and penetration, leaving Indiana vulnerable to three point shots because guys were slow to recover. Tony Bennett's system that Archie picked up on.

MIKE WOODSON: All right. Now that I know that, I'll say this from a defensive standpoint: The ball is the first and most important piece when you start building a defense, and somehow I got to get players to have pride in guarding the ball and not beg for help. That's where it starts.

And then you got to put a system in place where if there is a break down you got to have help there and that helper has to have help and then the next man has to have help, so it becomes a team defense.

I think great defensive teams, they work as a unit. Everybody is on a string, and when that damn ball goes up everybody is responsible for rebounding, so you can go and do what you do the other way.

So there is a lot of pieces in place that I got to put in because I'm very picky when it comes to defending, but it

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

all goes hand in hand. Great defensive teams learn to protect the paint and they learn to get out to shooters. It's all about effort and putting forth just the will to defend. It ain't going to be perfect.

I've learned over the years there is this thing called what ifs. If I say I want you to send the ball this way and it doesn't get sent that way and gets sent the other way, what are you going to do? You going to quit on the play? Next guy in line, in position to help you, is he going to help you stop the ball?

You'd be surprised. There are probably more what ifs in a game than there is the real deal. These are things that as a coach I kind of think out of the box when you're dealing with players, because, again, Knight thought out of the box when he worked with me here, and when we didn't do what was asked of us, he made it a point to make sure we got back in the box and did what we had to do.

There is going to be lot of things moving forward with this team. Again, they don't know me and I don't know them yet. Just by watching on film. That's why I'm so excited about getting them together and getting to work.

So we'll see.

Q. Just a question about you coming from the NBA with everyone so polished. You talk about the workouts on June 10th to get started. Is there anyone in particular you're excited to get your hands in the clay and mold that player, that you're just really, really hyped up to work with?

MIKE WOODSON: No. Not one particular player, because I know if we're going to be a big time team that competes in the Big Ten, it's got to be everybody. If a player goes down, I got make that next player that's in line feel comfortable about stepping in and playing.

That's what a team is all about. You can't play everybody 30, 40 minutes, but that guy that doesn't play a lot of minutes, he's got to be ready just in case.

What if? What if he gets hurt? Are you ready? Are you sitting over sulking the whole time because you weren't playing? I don't want players like that. I got to get them in the frame of mind.

To answer your question, I'm excited about getting the whole group together and putting a system in place on both ends of the floor, and then we'll have individual workouts for each and every player and then you'll see who grows and how quickly they grow.

That's what coaching and basketball to me, what it's always been about. When you look at the Davis kid, I sold him on he's got to get better, you know, from his right hand and being able to finish more willingly around the rim and he's got to develop a shot. When he picks and pops he's got to feel about good making that shot.

These are all individual things that we got to do with players, but at the end of the day, it becomes a team when everybody is clicking on all cylinders and we're doing the things that are necessary to win on both ends of the floor.

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