

# Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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## Coach Mike Woodson

### Press Conference



**Q. Tomorrow health-wise how is everybody doing? Is there anybody you expect to be out? And specifically Michael Durr, what's his status going into the first game?**

MIKE WOODSON: I'm going to know more today. He scrimmaged a little yesterday with us. We had a nice little workout with him and Tamar Bates. So we'll know more today, after we get out of practice, in terms of where the status of both of those guys.

**Q. How many friends and family will you have at the game tomorrow night? And second, are your emotions heading into this game any different than they were, say, heading into your first game with the Knicks or the Hawks or any other team?**

MIKE WOODSON: I don't know, you've been doing this so long. I'm excited about the game because I haven't been in that atmosphere in a long, long time, man.

And to be able to step back out on that floor in front of the fans that's going to come out and support us, I'm really looking forward to it. But at the end of the day I mean this is what we do. I coach and it's all about these players and trying to get them to play at a high level, compete at a high level and win.

So that's only my focus. I think when I walk out on the floor and I see the fans, that's going to be nice. But it's all about trying to get these guys to play at a high level.

Yes, I will have a lot of family, people that's going to come up from Indy. I've got people flying in as well that wants to come and see our team play, which is kind of nice.

**Q. Do you have a number?**

MIKE WOODSON: Oh, I haven't completed the add-up problem. It's a lot of -- I've got a lot. It's probably going to be 30 to 40 people, probably, that come up.

And then I've got people that are flying in from out of town

to be here. It's kind of nice.

**Q. What did you take from the close scrimmage against Belmont in terms of players picking up concepts, rotations so forth and what kind of progress are you looking forward from that in the opener against Eastern Michigan?**

MIKE WOODSON: I'm gauging everything on from when we started, almost four, five and a half months ago, the two games we had in the Bahamas and the Belmont scrimmage.

We've made some major progress, but again we still have a long way to go. I mean, it's hard to really gauge your team when you've got guys that are in and out doing that stretch. We had Xavier out for a little while.

We had Miller out for some time prior to coming back from the Bahamas, when he got hurt over there. And big Mike and Tamar Bates has been out.

So it's really hard to gauge where your team is when these are four guys that are a big piece of the puzzle that you brought in, that we brought in to really help us win basketball games.

So we're getting some of the bodies back. Like I said, big Mike and Tamar, we've got to gauge them today to see where they are based on practice yesterday. And I'm not in a rush to bring anybody back off of injury. This is a long season. And I just want to make sure those guys are good and ready to go for the Big Ten.

**Q. Any areas of specific improvement you want to see or anything that concerns you going into the season?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, again, when you talk about concerns, you just hope that guys are retaining things that you taught them. I think we're getting better in that area. But only time will tell.

I mean, it's hard to gauge. They go after each other in practice and practice has been so competitive, man. But it's hard to gauge it until you actually play an opponent.



And I just want to make sure that our defense stays on par in terms of where it's been and offensively we can continue to grow as a team, because I just don't think we're where we need to be offensively yet. But we're getting there.

**Q. You just mentioned briefly about you guys still aren't where you want to be offensively. Obviously a lot of the talk this offseason has been about the defensive intensity, the teaching that way. How have you grown since day one offensively and potentially where do you see you guys when you're fully healthy in terms of offensive potential?**

MIKE WOODSON: We've added a lot of different sets. And I think when you're building a team, it's getting the guys to understand how to play with each other offensively.

And the game has changed a little bit. I mean, trying to teach guys to play without the ball, sacrifice the ball when you got it in your hands. It ain't always got to be me, me.

Knowing everybody's position on the floor. Knowing who could make shots and who can't make shots. We know Trayce is going to be our low post and big Mike, our low post presence.

And we've got to know when to play through those guys and still be able to execute offense around them in order to be a good offensive team.

Those are the things that I'm searching for right now. And again in time we'll know more about our ball club as we go along. But in order to be a good offensive team you've got to make sacrifices.

And a lot of these guys, individually they always think I can do it or this guy can do it. And I get that. I was an offensive player. I understand that part of it.

But after -- the way it's played today, you've got to sacrifice it a little bit more and make sure that everybody's involved.

**Q. The number of friends it's going to be 17,000 because you're everybody's friend now. But I wanted to ask you if you know who is going to start for you tomorrow night, and then since we've last seen you in the last month or so, who has maybe stepped up to maybe bit of a pleasant surprise for you in practice?**

MIKE WOODSON: Again, practice has been so competitive. But I'm going to stay with the same lineup we've taken into the Bahamas games with Trey, Trayce -- I mean Race, Trey, Parker, Miller and Xavier.

And we've kind of started that way all three games, and it's been some positives and some negatives. But I think our rotating guys, guys that are coming off have gotten better.

They're pushing practice every day and that's a bonus, because it makes the first unit compete. And the guys like Rob and Gallo and even Logan and Geronimo, guys like that, they're pushing practice. Anthony.

It's been a nice mixture. So I'm just anxious to see where we are as a ball club as a whole once we jump it up tomorrow night.

**Q. Who are two or three guys who have really made big jumps? I don't mean guys like Trayce who are already at that level but who are two or three guys since you took over that have made substantial jumps?**

MIKE WOODSON: I think Rob. Geronimo, and even young Christian has had his moments. This is kind of a year for him where he's in that learning mode. But he's had his moments, flashes. I would probably say those three more than anybody, really, because those guys -- Rob's played a whole lot, but Geronimo has played spotty minutes and Christian didn't really play much at all.

He played a little bit here and there. But I think they've gotten a little bit better since we've started.

**Q. Overall with where you guys are at early in the season, is this a team that's going to have to outscore people to win, basically win on the offensive end, or are you guys going to need to really defend your way to wins early in the year?**

MIKE WOODSON: Right now our identity, when I look at the three games we've played, has been on the defensive end. And make no mistake about it. You've got to play defense in order to win.

Even when you get to the Big Ten, it's going to be that way. The teams that really defend and get after you a little bit are the teams that put themselves in position to win at a high level. And I don't care what level you play at.

Your defense has got to be pretty solid. And right now we are, like I said, our defense is a little bit ahead of our offense right now, which I kind of like.

**Q. You mentioned rotations. I wanted to ask you, you mentioned starting five, do you have a sense how deep you'll go into the bench assuming you've got close games here early on, and do you imagine that's going to tighten up as the season progresses?**

MIKE WOODSON: Again, I've always asked my staff, when I got here, what are most colleges and how deep do most teams in college basketball go. And a lot of them said eight, nine guys. Some teams go seven. I love to build a team where you can go as deep as ten because then you don't burn guys out and about time you get to the Big Ten everybody's fresh and feeling good about themselves.

And I don't know if we're there in terms of being able to go ten yet. But somehow we've got to work Mike and Tamar Bates back into the mix, because again they're big pieces to the puzzle as well.

And if they're able to hold their own and add to what we've got, we probably could go nine or ten. You just never know.

**Q. To follow up on what Jeff asked a couple questions ago, I was curious, especially in these early games and as you said, you maybe bring a couple of guys back in as they get healthy. What are the marker points for you in terms of I know every team will be a work of progress in November and December, but the marker points for you when look at team-wide progress and you say I see progress there, I see the fundamentals of what we need to be doing right working and the guys buying into that and really embracing that. What are things for you that track success early on here as the team evolves in the early part of the season?**

MIKE WOODSON: Again, the fact that everybody's playing pick and roll basketball, your pick and roll defense has got to be sharp. So I'm constantly looking at that and looking at our rotations and our guys in proper position to help when there's breakdowns defensively.

That's always major when you go into ball games. And then offensively I'm just trying to see if guys can learn how to play with each other without dominating the ball. I mean, we're going to run a bunch of pick and rolls, but if it ain't there I hope the guy can sacrifice the ball. I'm forcing them to do that and the next guy might have to make the play.

But that's been a work in progress. And I just gotta keep at it and get these guys comfortable in terms of how we want to play our offense.

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