

# Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

## Coach Mike Woodson

Postgame Media Conference



Indiana - 68, Eastern Michigan - 62

**Q. First of all, you build a 21-point lead. Then it really goes away there. You have to hang on at the end. What did you feel were the biggest issues when the lead slipped away?**

COACH WOODSON: Again, this is a team that we've assembled that we're trying to learn how to win. And I thought when we built the lead, we stopped playing the way we got the lead.

And until we get enough games under us, with our ball club, this is the first test with this team. And, again, I was happy that we didn't crack down the stretch and we made winning basketball plays down the stretch to secure the game. And that's a good sign.

But we have got to go back and break this film down and talk about how we built the lead and how we can extend the lead going forward, because I didn't think we handled that part of it very well tonight.

**Q. You started out, I think they were 3-for-14, might have missed their first 10 or 11 shots. Was that the key defensively what you're looking for from your team?**

COACH WOODSON: Yeah, I mean, again, I've been saying it all along, our defense is really -- when I look at the three exhibition games that we played, this is kind of how we played defense. And I expected that coming out tonight.

Didn't really know -- I mean, we had a good offensive display in one of the games in the Bahamas. And then against Belmont, we had, we were really good offensively, I thought, the way we moved the ball and made shots.

We're missing a lot of wide-open 3s right now. So we've got to get better in that area because these same guys have been making them in practice and they just gotta feel comfortable taking them in the game and making them.

They will. We'll get to that point.

But I like the way we started the ball game based on our defense because, I keep saying it, if we can build a defensive foundation here, we'll be in every ball game and give ourselves a chance to win.

**Q. I was going to ask you about the 3s and maybe also the ball movement. There were times when it really hopped and there were times it didn't. How did you feel that aspect in terms of what you were trying to do with the pick-and-roll?**

COACH WOODSON: The few times, when it did hop, it looked pretty good. Trayce is going to get double-teamed, we know that.

So when the ball comes out of there on the first pass, that shot is a lot of times open. And we had good looks at it with Xavier and Rob and whoever was in that spot. And we just didn't knock them down.

But, again, we've got to keep shooting them because it's a part of the game. And we do have to play inside/out and get better ball movement. But that's on me. I've got to get them to that point.

**Q. What's going on in your head, I guess, in that moment coming out on the court with your family there, just that moment, kind of your first time being introduced as IU's head coach?**

COACH WOODSON: Again, it's good to be back home. The fan base here is like no other fan base. They stay in the game all the way from the beginning to the end. And that's helpful and that's healthy for our young team as we grow.

We're going to need our fan base. So it was good to be back, but in a different. I played here many, many years ago. Those were good times. Trying to get this team where that was back in the day. It would be kind of nice.

**Q. I know you focused on the game and everything, was there any points in the game where you just took a**

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**step back and looked up and kind of appreciated everything and being back?**

COACH WOODSON: Sure. I mean when I walked on the floor, I appreciated the fact that I had spent my career here as a young basketball player. And I left it -- this team allowed me to go into the NBA and having a successful career in the NBA. And now I'm back. It's a special time for me.

But again, guys, this is not about me, man. This is about 17 guys that are wearing this uniform that we're trying to get these guys back on top and teach them how to win basketball games.

**Q. Talking about the 3-point shooting, is there almost an element, you're not wanting guys to be reckless, but saying, listen, you've got to keep shooting. Even if they're not going in, don't get shy about shooting them?**

COACH WOODSON: I would never give -- I want them to have confidence in shooting them. But I thought there were about three or four that were just unnecessary. And those are the ones that you gotta milk time on the clock and try to get a better shot.

And again this team is learning. But it's my job to make sure they know what the hell they're doing. And I thought we had a lot of dry moments offensively, and that we've got to go back to the drawing board and fix.

**Q. You guys only had eight turnovers tonight and four of those came in the first six minutes of the game. Only four the final 34. For the first game out were you happy with that part of it in regards to protecting the ball the way they did?**

COACH WOODSON: I was very happy with that. We set goals coming in this season at, 12 or less turnovers is our goal. And if we get over that, then I gotta punish them a little bit. But we've been pretty good in that area in the three exhibition games. And tonight was eight turnovers, that's pretty good.

**Q. Defensively you guys gave up only 19 in the first half, but 43 in the second half. What did you feel the biggest issues were on defense the last 20 minutes?**

COACH WOODSON: Again, I thought our switching was pretty good for the most part. But you still have to challenge shots. And I thought they pulled the trigger on a few of our switches where we just didn't contest hard enough, where in the first half we were contesting everything and we were kind of up in them defensively.

And I thought we got soft.

We were comfortable, put it that way, with the lead. And then it changed drastically.

So these are just things we've got to learn from. And it's my job to make sure that we learn from them. When we're in that situation again, maybe we can just push it a little bit higher than the 20.

**Q. You guys only outrebounded them by one. You had only five offensive rebounds. Looked like on paper you had a size advantage. Are those numbers that you're disappointed in the effort or how do you explain those?**

COACH WOODSON: I'm not disappointed. Again, Trayce and Race will get rebounds. We've got to get guys picking up the scraps. When we get Mike back, he's been known to rebound the ball, too, as well. He'll help in that regard.

But, again, guys, I mean, I'm not highly disappointed. I like the way we played in spurts. And the fact that we made the plays coming down the stretch. A team that hadn't been together a long time that's been challenged, because in the three exhibition games we weren't really challenged. And we was challenged tonight coming down the homestretch and our guys stepped up and did what they needed to do.

**Q. Are you keeping the game ball as a souvenir? And how much better does it feel to be 1-0 than 0-1?**

COACH WOODSON: It feels good to be 1-0. We have a long way to go, gentlemen, but yes, I will keep that ball as a souvenir.

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