

# Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

Friday, November 12, 2021

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

## Coach Mike Woodson

Postgame Media Conference



Indiana - 85, Northern Illinois - 49

**Q. What were you pleased with, especially keeping them off the 3-point line?**

COACH WOODSON: We were solid right from the start. I thought we did a great job on their perimeter play because they're so good in terms of penetrating the basketball and making plays off the bounce. And I thought we did a great job in moving our feet and keeping them in front of us. And we did it for 40 minutes and that was kind of nice to see.

**Q. Why do you think your defense looks so much better tonight than in the first game? Anything in particular?**

COACH WOODSON: I thought our defense was pretty good in the first game, too. No, we just...

**Q. How good did you think it was tonight?**

COACH WOODSON: It was great all the way through, for 40 minutes. I thought we played 28 minutes the other night. We were up 20 with 12 on the clock, I believe it was, the other night. And then we got comfortable and they were able to get back into the game. I thought tonight we just sustained it all the way through.

**Q. Talk about your team's shot-blocking performance and defense in the paint.**

COACH WOODSON: Well, again, I mean Race and Trayce has a lot to do with that. I think Trayce had about seven blocks tonight. And I mean they're just being active. And we're going to need that.

I mean, big Mike, having him back tonight, he's a good shot blocker as well. And Geronimo, as athletic as he is, he's capable of blocking shots, too.

I just thought tonight it was a total team effort. I thought everybody that played tonight gave us effort and did exactly what we asked them to do, which was kind of nice

to see.

**Q. I don't know if you think about finding a second unit, but what does it say for some of the guys you're pulling off the bench? It felt like defense and rebounding in particular, no matter what guy was out there the switches were clean, seemed like guys were communicating well and statistically the defense never rested?**

COACH WOODSON: Again, a lot of that is the work you've got to give them credit because they've been working over these last six months that we've been together. And our defense has always been a little bit ahead of our offense, but it's just nice to see. I can't promise minutes to anybody but I always tell these guys whatever minutes you get you make it the most important minutes to help us win basketball games. And that's what they're doing right now.

**Q. We've seen Trayce a lot in the past you know score a lot of points but seems like these first two games rebounding and blocking shots he's been better than he was last season. Is that something that you really emphasized to him and how much have you seen him grow in those areas since you started working with him?**

COACH WOODSON: Again, it goes all the way back to the beginning when we sat down and he decided that he was going to stay on board. I showed him a lot of the things that I thought he could, the areas that I thought he could be better. And he's really been working in those areas. I mean, he's improved a lot. He really has. And a lot of it is when you're coaching young players, they think that they play hard. And I've always thought this, there's always another level that a player can get to. And from a coaching standpoint that's what we're trying to push these guys to continue to play at a high level and play harder.

**Q. In the first game, it was Xavier and Trayce who scored in double figures. In this one Race also scored in double figures. Who would you like to see take that next step moving on?**

COACH WOODSON: Again, we scored 85 points tonight, and everybody had their hand in that, which is all right with me. We don't have a team that I can sit here and tell you guys that this guy's going to get 30 tonight and this guy's going to get 20. We're not built like that. It's got to be a total team effort across the board on both ends of the floor.

**Q. That second group you had out there with Phinisee, Tamar, Trey, Jordan and Michael, how much time have they had to spend together?**

COACH WOODSON: Not a lot.

**Q. What do you like about that lineup, and what do you think they did well together when they were out there together?**

COACH WOODSON: They haven't spent a lot of time together. This is Mike's first game back. He's probably been practicing probably now a week and a half coming back. And Tamar too. He hadn't been out there very much this season.

But what I did like, they were poised and from a defensive standpoint they stayed the course in terms of our coverages. And when you do that, that lets me know that you listened and you're doing all the necessary things to help us win.

And offensively they shared the ball. I mean, it was kind of nice to see how they played offense which was kind of nice.

**Q. Race said yesterday you guys were focused a lot on improving the tempo of the offense, both full court and half court. How did you feel that progressed from game to game?**

COACH WOODSON: It was better tonight. Again, we didn't have that moment where we just went stale. I thought the ball moved. They forced our hand a little bit by pressing. So it gave us an opportunity to push the ball and get quick strikes that way, which I'm fine with that as well. But I thought tonight we really did a pretty good job executing in the half-court game.

**Q. Getting back to the defense, I think NIU didn't score a first field goal in the first half until the 12:35 mark. Was there reinforcement or reminder in the locker room about it?**

COACH WOODSON: We talked about it, you can rest assured. That was probably the main topic in terms of how we played the first game. And I just told them, we can't have that letdown. When you've got somebody down

you've got to consistently play the way you've got the lead and I thought we did that.

**Q. Xavier and Robbie, two guys that bring different things to the table but complement each other at some points. Does that give you flexibility in the game?**

COACH WOODSON: It does because we can play them both together when teams play small ball with smaller guards. Both guys can defend. Both guys can initiate our offense. So that's a bonus for me.

And then I've got Christian over there that I have faith in too if I've got to throw him in as well because he's coming in as well.

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