

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

Saturday, December 4, 2021

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Tamar Bates

Race Thompson

Postgame Media Conference



Indiana 68, Nebraska 55

Q. Talk about keeping the game close while you were going through some of those struggles the first ten minutes.

RACE THOMPSON: I think our strength of the team right now is defense. So I think we just talked to each other about slowing down offense and then helping our defense, making our defense make plays for us on offense. So I think stepping up our defense, talking to each other, getting each other going, I think that's really what helped us coming into the second half.

Q. Tamar, the bench struggled in Syracuse but you guys came in and gave up a major spark last ten minutes of the first half. How important was that run in the game?

TAMAR BATES: That's what it's all about to us, really. Just like how we respond to adversity and when we don't play as well as we expect to. So I mean, obviously like we talk before the game, after the Syracuse game, but we just got laser sharp focus coming into it making sure we just provide some kind of spark.

Q. Mike Woodson yesterday said Anthony Leal is getting closer to having more playing time, had more playing time today. What had you seen from him that he's improved on?

RACE THOMPSON: I don't think anything was holding him back. I think he was just searching for a spot. We have a lot of good players coming in the guard spot. We have Parker, Tamar, Tre went down. I mean, all our guards are really good. I mean, you see Anthony every day in practice he goes 125 percent every single day and he really deserves it.

I don't think any of us are surprised that he goes out there, gets a steal, makes a shot and that's what he does every

single day in practice. So I'm really proud of him. Hopefully he can, good keep going out there and doing that.

Q. How much confidence does it give you guys as starters knowing that you guys get off to a slow start and you have the bench to come in and pick you guys up?

RACE THOMPSON: I think our bench can start on matchup Big Ten teams in the country. We have starters coming off the bench. Knowing we have scoop coming off the bench, Anthony, Jordan, anybody coming off the bench that we can believe in them and trust them to make shots, make plays and be in the right spots. I think that's just what makes a good team.

Q. Trayce finished with 14 he had six late in the second half. You were winning even though he wasn't having one of his better games. How important was that?

TAMAR BATES: It's just us like continuing to know where our strengths are. I mean, he wasn't really worried about what was next to his name on the box score after the game. He's worried about winning. The defense, we just took what they gave us, and he was able to be more being aggressive and score down the stretch.

Q. Being on the second unit, how important is it to have Rob back as a catalyst?

TAMAR BATES: I mean, we definitely missed him when he was out but you know just him being a veteran that he is, and knowing like when I go in a game, I always got somebody that's going to help me out and make sure I'm doing what I'm supposed to do and make sure I'm focused because he's been doing this for a minute it. So it was great to have Rob back as you can see.

Q. You missed all four of your threes against Syracuse; what does it take for you to bounce back and then make three today?

TAMAR BATES: Shooters shoot. I'm going to keep



shooting the ball. I can miss 10 threes; I'm going to shoot the 11th one. It really don't matter to me. It don't matter. We get the reps you have every day. We work at it. What's four misses to however many shots I've made, like ever, like when I work out or anything.

So I mean, it's just staying confident, believing in myself and the fact that my teammates have that believe in me that they going to keep swinging it to me because I'm knocking it down, that makes me just want to make the shot because they believe in me the same way I believe in myself.

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