

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Mike Woodson

Press Conference



MIKE WOODSON: Morning.

Q. The road, obviously you guys were very competitive in two games but couldn't quite get over the hump. What do you think it's going to take this time in approach and mindset to achieve that first road win?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, just put a 40-minute game together. I thought against Wisconsin we played all the way up to a minute and 40 where we were up two, got the ball, and we lose the ball, they come down and hit a three. We didn't recover from it.

To me, I mean, when you're out on the road, you got to play all the way through. You can't think that you're just going to win it in 38. It's a 40-minute game, man. We just didn't complete the game against Wisconsin. We got to put a 40-minute ballgame together, period, from beginning to the end.

Q. You talked a lot early on in the season that you had to work quite a bit on defense. Have you now been able to pivot to work a lot more on offense, given extra practice time right now?

MIKE WOODSON: We do them both still. I mean, defense is a high priority. Our offense is a high priority. So we kind of mix and choose in practice each day that we step out on the floor which way we're going to go.

Yesterday we had about almost a three-and-a-half, four-hour practice with film session. There was a mix-up between defense and offense. That's pretty much every day when we step out on the floor.

Q. I know in NBA games when the games get more important that rotations and bench minutes can sometimes shrink. Have you thought much about how you're going to handle that as you enter the Big Ten season, games will be closer and tighter? Do you want to play nine or 10 if you can?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, it all depends. Flow of the game. I mean, I never really go into a game saying I'm going to play nine or 10 guys. Fortunately for us we've had an opportunity to do that, but it's going to be based on the game and who's playing well and how I feel in terms of who's going to be in the rotation.

I'd like to play nine, 10 guys. It would be great for our ballclub. We've done that some this season. Again, the Big Ten and the game itself is going to put you in a position to make that decision.

Q. Is there anything maybe outside of the court that has helped you get through this tough time?

MIKE WOODSON: Again, man, I mean, there's not a whole lot you can really do about it. You just try to keep your players and staff and people around you safe.

But this thing, it's an unknown thing again. You can be in a room sitting with people and you might have a person in there that has it, the other four or five people don't have it.

It's hard to explain what's going on. For the most part we've been very ahead of the game in terms of how we're trying to stay away from it.

I mean, our players have been pretty secure. We try to mask up and do the things that we supposed to do now. Again, I can't control the players once they leave the gym and go out and get a bite to eat or mingle around campus with friends.

Again, it's tough times, man. Everybody's got to realize it and try to do the best they can to stay safe.

Q. I wanted to see how far along Trey Galloway is at this point, if you're expecting to have him available on Sunday?

MIKE WOODSON: He won't play Sunday. Yesterday was the first time he's had some contact. Wasn't a long period of contact, but we got him back out on the floor just a little bit.



He's been doing the endurance stuff we do every day for a little while now. But he won't be ready for Sunday. Hopefully the Ohio State game we'll have him back.

We just got to keep gauging it day by day to see where he is, how he looks.

Q. Are there one or two things that you can pinpoint through non-conference play that you really need to improve on going into Big Ten play?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, not turning the ball over's going to be one. I mean, right now that's kind of been... We've been a lot better the last five games. And making free throws, guys. When you're in close games, you look at the two games, Syracuse and Wisconsin, a couple of possessions here or there, we probably sitting here 12-0. Free throws had a lot to do with it in the Syracuse game as well as turning it over, missed free throws coming down the stretch in the Wisconsin game.

Those are two areas that I'd like to improve in as we start to navigate through the Big Ten season.

Q. Obviously you had some unexpected time off with not having the game on Wednesday. What maybe did you focus on with that time in terms of practice? You mentioned you had a longer practice and longer film session. What was the emphasis of that extra time?

MIKE WOODSON: I mean, when we watch film, we always concentrate on things that we don't do well. Then I always put kind of a feel-good tape, a lot of things that we've done well. That's how you teach through tape. You can't always smack them over the head with all the bad things, but you can't hide it. You got to show it. To me it's teaching. Then you give them the things that they've done well in correlation with the things that they've done terrible on the floor. I mean, that's how we teach through tape.

Yesterday on the floor we just were working on our defense, working on the offense to get better, man. Them the only two areas that execution is a big key when you're talking about developing a team. That means execution on both ends of the floor. You got to work in those areas to get better every day that you step out there.

Q. Going back to the offense, do you feel like you've had to adjust the style of play that maybe you had in mind when you took the job to fit the specific strengths of this team as you've come to know it?

MIKE WOODSON: I mean, as all coaches do, you play to your strengths, you try to find ways of getting guys to be better in terms of other offense.

Our offense is not that bad considering. I never thought we would be in the position where we are in terms of the three ball. I didn't know who would be able to really make it consistently. I mean, we're shooting right at 37%. I mean, I would like to get to 40, but that's a work in progress. We're averaging right at 77 points a game, giving up 61. That's a plus 15. That's great when I look at our offense versus defense.

The only downfall offensively I think right now is us making free throws and finishing possessions. When something's called, we're better when we call something offensively because then they know what's coming. When we're trying to play on the fly a lot of times, that's where a lot of our mistakes come.

We just got to get better in that area because you're not going to be able to run your set all the way through every time. There's always going to be some breakdown, then you have to free-lance and feel good about how you free-lance and play offense. We're not there yet in that area.

Q. Generally speaking, according to KenPom, Penn State plays very slowly this year. How does your game plan and preparation play generally against a team that wants to slow the game down compared to one that wants to run up and down the court?

MIKE WOODSON: It's not going to change any. They slow it down, we got to get stops in their slowdown offense. I'm watching them on tape. They move around. Their pace is probably not that high, but they move the ball around. They try to get up and down and make plays. They got pretty good point guard play and perimeter play. They got a big guy inside that plays the perimeter and inside as well that triggers a lot that they do.

I mean, this is not a game that we can go in and take them lightly. They played Ohio State early pretty close, then Ohio State eventually made the spread in the game.

I like their team. I mean, I think they're well-coached. We got to put a 40-minute game together, man. There's no gimmes I don't think in the Big Ten. When I look at these teams, man, everybody can beat each other. We got to be ready to commit ourselves to 40 minutes when we go in there to play.

Q. I'm working on a piece on Tamar Bates. What is your evaluation of him, how he's handled his role in particular? What do you like about what he's brought for you guys so far?

MIKE WOODSON: I mean, he's kind of been up and down a little bit. That's no knock. He's a freshman. I get it. He has had the injuries. I thought coming back from The Bahamas when he had his injury, that kind of set him back a little bit.

We going to need Tamar because he has shown that he can make plays, do things for us from an offensive standpoint. We got to get him better from a defensive standpoint, being able to defend the ball, not give up dribble penetration so quickly. It's still a work in progress with him.

The good thing and the beauty about Tamar, he comes to work every day and he puts in the time. He'll continue to grow but we got to help him speed the process up, I think.

Q. When Michael Durr showed up here, we figured when the Big Ten season rolled around you might want to play him and Trayce together. We haven't seen that in games yet. Trayce mentioned you did that in practice. When you're going up against some of these big seven-footers in the league, are there times we'll see them together?

MIKE WOODSON: You might. I haven't played two centers like that pretty much in my whole career as a head coach because we've always had a nice, big, powerful center in the NBA that could pretty much hold their own.

That's hard for me to even say right now. I look at Purdue, and they play the big seven-footer, they come out back with Williams as the backup center. I'm going to try Michael on their second center, their second unit like we've been playing.

But for Mike, we just got to get him probably in a little better shape. He's been working in that area based on him coming off the injury that he had.

He will play now that we're getting ready to go through this Big Ten and deal with some of these big guys because he's got a big body and he likes to bang a little bit, too. He's just got to be ready to go because I'm going to play him some. But I don't know if I'll play the two together. I just don't know that yet.

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