

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Xavier Johnson

Rob Phinisee

Postgame Media Conference



Indiana 73, Minnesota 60

XAVIER JOHNSON: Defense, honestly. Our defense, again, just stops them running. We got out and we started making shots, and that's what led to our break.

Q. It's a long season full of ups and downs. How important was it for you to have a game like today to really get things kicking back up in gear?

XAVIER JOHNSON: Yeah, I've been having pretty bad games. I'm not mad about it, but it's something that I've got to push through because I'm working every day. I work on my craft every day, and my team believes in me, and I'm going to continue to work for them.

Q. Xavier, I know you touched on having a few bad games. You even heard a few boos. I was curious about your reaction to that and what did it mean for Coach Woodson to have your back after that?

XAVIER JOHNSON: It means a lot. I mean, when I first came in he told me he had my back, and that was just the case scenario today, that he really had to have my back. That's the only person that I need to believe in me because he's my coach, and he's the only person that matters.

Q. Rob, it looked like they sagged back a lot in the first half. What does Coach tell you in those situations and did you see a change in the second half in their approach?

ROB PHINISEE: Yeah, obviously he tells us to shoot the ball if you're wide open. I knocked down those shots in the first half, and I feel like they weren't sagging off as much in the second half, so I didn't really get as many looks as I did, but yeah, Coach really just builds our confidence, tells us to shoot it whenever we're open, so I made shots this game.

Q. To stay on that, at what point do you notice that

that's what they're doing, that they're giving you all day, and did you kind of take that opportunity to say, okay, I'm going to take my time with this and not rush anything? How does it help you when they're going to leave you that open?

ROB PHINISEE: Really I felt like just coming off the bench, I saw how they were guarding X, so I mean, usually that's how teams usually guard us the same a little bit. When I came in, I really just was shot ready, and I knocked down the shots.

Q. Xavier, you mentioned defense. How effective are you two together when teams like to go five out, try to get dribble drives? How effective is the defense when you and Rob are in there together?

XAVIER JOHNSON: It's effective a lot. I feel like we get a lot of stops with me and him on the floor because it's hard to beat us all off the dribble. We both pick up 94 feet, and we just let it play defense because we know it gets the team going.

Q. Just following up on that, the two of you were in what seemed to be a defensive-heavy lineup at the end of the game. Do you guys look at coming in there as just kind of closing out games defensively at that point late in the second half with that five on the floor?

ROB PHINISEE: Yeah, that's all what Coach really preaches to us in practice is defense. I know we're, I think, first in the Big Ten in maybe field goal percentage, defensive field goal percentage. Yeah, we just try to keep teams under 60 points and just try to shut off their best players. I know they got some buckets, Willis and Battle, but I feel like we did a pretty decent job with them as a team defense.

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