

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Coach Mike Woodson

Press Conference



Q. Curious on Purdue, a bit of a unique matchup because of their size in the post. You haven't necessarily gone against a team where you've had to double too much in the post. What are your thoughts on how you'll defend that and just the size of a guy like Edey? You don't really see too many guys that are 7'4" that can catch it and go to the rim. How do you prepare your guys to be ready for that?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, we've got another day to prepare. That's kind of how I look at it. No, he definitely poses a threat. He's so big, and you've got Williams there, too. They both are great players down low on the block. That's a big part of their initial threat in terms of their offense, and playing inside out, and we're going to have to deal with it.

Again, we've got another day to prepare, and we've got to come ready to commit for 40 minutes. That's all I can tell you guys. They're a hell of a team. Their front court is damn good, and they've got guys that can make the long ball, as well. I mean, they pose a double threat. They've got inside and out, so we've got to defend it all.

Q. How is Trayce doing? Did he practice yesterday? Did he get treatment? How do you approach the rivalry aspect of this? You were a player, you played in it, and how do you approach it as a coach in terms of motivation?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, again, I look at it as just the next game for us, and yes, here in the state of Indiana, Purdue and Indiana has always been a big rivalry. You can't get from underneath that. It's what it is.

But at the end of the day it's the next game on our schedule, and we're treating it that way. We can't look past them. They're staring us right in the face, and we've got to come out and compete.

As far as Trayce, he didn't do a whole lot yesterday, and I'm sure that we'll work him back in slowly today, and he'll be ready to play tomorrow.

Q. When you're looking at this Purdue offense as a whole, obviously you touched on the front court. They also have some really talented backcourt players, as well. What are one or two keys defensively for you guys to slow them down offensively to come out with a win?

MIKE WOODSON: Again, I've watched them play a number of teams, and they've got the total package. They do. They play hard. Painter has done a hell of a job in terms of implementing his system and how he wants them to play. It should be a hell of a game.

We play well here at home, and it's in front of our fans, and we've just got to commit. I can't tell you how the game is going to turn out, but we've got to commit for 40 minutes. We can't play a half. You can't play 35 minutes. You've got to commit for 40 minutes to beat a good team.

Q. You mentioned just the rivalry and how important it is in the state. What are your favorite memories of playing in this as a player? It was kind of an interesting time then, I think you played them in the tournament, played them in the NIT. What do you remember about the rivalry and what it meant to you?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, the games were a major battle. Nobody wanted to give. Playing at Purdue was tough, and I'm sure they feel the same way when they come here. It's tough.

We happened to meet the one year in the NIT championship, and it came down to a last-second shot. It's just always been a battle over the years.

They've kind of had their way here of late, but hopefully we can make that change tomorrow night. We've got to just, like I said, commit ourselves for 40 minutes. It's not going to be something that's going to be hand-delivered to us. You've got to go get it.

Q. When you go into a big game like this, philosophically I know there's some coaches who really dial into the opponent and try to go through



every little thing how to take away from the opponent. Some coaches go, hey, we've got to focus on our team first. Philosophically do you go one way or the other on big games like this?

MIKE WOODSON: It's all about what we do. I've always said that, it doesn't matter what you do, it's always about you as a team. We've got to know what they do. I get all of that, but it's about what we do and how hard we do it.

Yeah, I focus in on what teams do. We scout teams and things of that nature, but it still comes down to what we do on both ends of the floor. If we're able to come down and execute offensively and get good shots, not turn it over, then defend and rebound the ball, then you put yourself in a tremendous place to win games. We pretty much have done that this year. We've just got to continue to grow in that area.

But it's all about what we do. All about it.

Q. Matt Painter said last week or so on a BTN show that he used to emulate you when you were a player and when he was a young kid. Curious your reaction to that, and just overall the job he's done at Purdue and your early impressions of meeting him and talking to him over the summer?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, I've always had a great deal of respect, and that's awful nice of him to say something like that as a young kid. You never know how young kids view you, but that's kind of some nice words.

Listen, I've watched him coach over the years, and I've watched Purdue teams, and they've always been competitive. He's built his system the right way. I've got nothing but big respect for him. I know that this game tomorrow means a lot to him, as well, but it means a lot to us as Indiana Hoosier fans, as well, too.

Q. Is this the kind of game why you recruited Michael Durr with this kind of size?

MIKE WOODSON: Yes, it is, and he's going to have to play some minutes tomorrow, again, because of the fact that they have a double threat in Williams and the big fella. We've got to keep bodies on them. Yes, he will play some tomorrow. Probably a little bit more than he's played here in the past.

Q. Going back to Michael Durr, I know he hasn't been on the court a whole lot with Trayce Jackson-Davis, but is this the type of game we could see both of them together due to the size of Purdue?

MIKE WOODSON: No, not really because they don't really play Williams and big fella together at all. They kind of back each other up. No, I won't do that. It'll be one or the other that'll be on the floor. We've just got to weigh it out, see how it presents itself and see where we go with it.

Q. There's been a lot of talk about the rivalry aspect of the game, and with so many guys that aren't from Indiana and you have to balance it, how do you balance the rivalry aspect with just the game aspect of this?

MIKE WOODSON: I've tried to keep it -- a lot of these guys that are new, they don't know, and I get it. But I'm not selling that. I'm selling the game. To me, it's the next game. The rivalry is what it is. Protecting home is more important.

Again, they just happen to be the next one on the schedule. It's all about the game to me. Everything else takes care of itself if you come out and commit yourself for 40 minutes and walk out of our building with a W.

Q. I know you have nothing to do with this current nine-game losing streak, but your Indiana playing career ended with a game against Purdue. What do you recall about that 1980 game, and how long did that difficulty and sadness linger with you after your career ended against a game with Purdue?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, it's tough because again, if you recall back when I was a senior, there was a lot at stake that year for me personally. The Final Four being in Indianapolis where I grew up, on my birthday to be exact, on March the 24th, and this being my last year, I mean, there was just a lot. There were a lot of accolades on the table in terms of scoring in the Big Ten, Indiana history scoring.

To lose and go out the way we did, it was a tough day for me. Again, I didn't have as much in the tank that I thought I had coming back from the back surgery. That was tough. And I played. I asked Knight to play me; don't baby me. When I came back from the surgery, I think I averaged probably 36, 38 minutes all the way out.

By the time we got to the Purdue game, there's no excuse, they were the better team that night in Lexington, there's no doubt about that, I just didn't have much left in the tank.

To go out that way was tough because it's Purdue, you know? But hey, for me it was a hell of a run. That's all I can say. It put me back in the position to be able to still continue to play, and that meant more to me than anything. Instead of ending my career I was still able to go on and

continue to play.

But that was a tough year, ending it that way. But hey, we've moved on since then and now I'm here back coaching, so it's all great.

Q. I'm not sure if you've been asked about their guards, but in particular Jaden Ivey. What impresses you about him and the improvement he's made in the year?

MIKE WOODSON: He's a handful, man. I can't help but think if he continues to grow and learn, he's going to be really, really, really good. He's a good player now. He does a lot of wonderful things on the floor. His speed really up and down the floor changes the game.

He's a guy that's able to go and kind of get shots and do his thing on his own, and that causes a problem, too, because you've got to always know where he is and when he's got the ball in his hand he's a major threat.

Again, I like everything about their ballclub. They've had a hell of a season so far, and should be a good game tomorrow night.

Q. Throughout your coaching career how much time do you spend worrying about tinkering with the starting five or are you more of a how-you-finish-the-game-is-much-more-important-than-how-you-start-it kind of guy?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, I mean, over the years -- you try to always get a set group in play that you start, and then sometimes you make changes based on how guys are playing and how your team is performing. But you try to put the best five on the floor that you think you can win with, and then you start your rotations.

Again, I've always said, and I said it to you a week ago, it doesn't matter who starts, it's a matter of who finishes. The other night our best player was on the bench hurt, and we were still able to pull it out and do the things that we needed to do to secure the win. That's because guys that had to come in, their heads were in the game and they were ready to go. It was like that next mentality, next up.

I try to always have a set group in play, and then I just build on it and go from there based on who's playing well and who's not.

Q. We're talking to Rob Phinisee in a little while here. I wonder what are some of the challenges that you've faced with him getting him to play the kind of basketball that we all know he's capable of playing?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, if he plays like he did in the Ohio State game, we probably won't be having this conversation. He's had a tough go at it in the past. I'm just trying to get him to forget what happened in the past. You're playing for Coach Woodson now, and Coach Woodson loves you and I'm in your corner and I'm saying it's okay to go do your thing, because I see something maybe in him that he probably doesn't see in himself. I've just got to keep helping him. I think he can help us in the long run as we continue this journey.

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