

# Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

Thursday, January 20, 2022  
Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

**Rob Phinisee**

**Xavier Johnson**

Postgame Media Conference



Indiana 68, Purdue 65

ROB PHINISEE: We just wanted to win the game, so I made the big shot.

**Q. We can hear you guys now. We hear you now good. Xavier, you basically had to play almost that entire game without Trayce and didn't seem to blink. How much of that was just veteran leadership and knowing that that's the way it's got to be, and that was the way that you guys were going to get that done, you two?**

XAVIER JOHNSON: We're a great team overall. We have great talent. Coach recruited great talent to come in, and we had talent that actually stayed too as well. We all just came out and competed, and we got the job done, and I'm at a loss of words right now how happy I am.

**Q. Rob, the last couple of games I think you had only had two points in the last two games combined, and you came out and had 17 and really got the offense going in the first half. What changed? It seemed like you were more aggressive and more confident.**

ROB PHINISEE: I would say just having faith, faith in myself no matter what happens. I actually had a talk with Coach Woodson before shoot-around today, and he told me just if no one else in your corner that he is in my corner. We had a really good talk before shoot-around, and that just really boosted my spirits. Finally. We finally beat Purdue. That was, what, 0-6? We just needed this win. We needed this win bad.

**Q. It's one thing to beat a top five team, but how sweet was it for you to beat a team in your own backyard where you are from?**

ROB PHINISEE: Great. Every time I go home, people always talk trash to me. I just finally needed to get one. Yeah, that was huge for us. X had a really big game the

second half. Michael Durr, he came in when Trayce went down, and everybody really stepped up, and it was a team effort out there.

**Q. Rob, what was that like after the game, the students coming on the court and all that? Just what was that like?**

ROB PHINISEE: It was hot. It was hot out there, I'll tell you that. No, just something I won't ever forget. Just these fans, they've supported me through everything, so I just want to say thank you. The crowd tonight was huge. They really boosted us. That moment is a moment I will never forget.

**Q. Rob, have you ever felt that way on the basketball court since you've been at I.U., and could you also talk a little bit about what Mike Woodson has done for you in terms of your confidence?**

ROB PHINISEE: Honestly, no, not really. In the first half I felt like every time I shot the ball it was going to go in. Coach Woodson, from the jump he knew I struggled last year. He has been saying all the time that he's going to keep believing in me and keep instilling confidence in me. I played my heart out today, played with the heart on my sleeve tonight.

**Q. You guys have been criticized a lot this year. How does it feel to have that game and shush the doubters?**

XAVIER JOHNSON: It feels good. Obviously, we see it a lot, but as I said before, only word that matters right now is coaches. It's only one win as well, so we've got plenty more to go.

**Q. Rob, talk about what this can do for the rest of the season for you to get a jump-start on this, the team. Obviously, it's a gigantic win, but you guys have slayed two streaks here. You have the road streak and now the streak to Purdue, and you have another challenge coming up with Michigan. What does this do for you guys confidence-wise going forward?**

ROB PHINISEE: It's huge. It's really huge. They're the



fourth ranked team in the country, so it's really a schedule booster at the end of the season. Really we just have to celebrate tonight and then tomorrow we're back at it at practice and got to get ready for Michigan. We've just got to take it one game at a time.

**Q. This is a bigger-picture question, but did you go to I.U.-Purdue games growing up, and are there any memories that stick out to you from there?**

ROB PHINISEE: I think I went to one or two back when Purdue -- they were really good. JaJuan Johnson and Robbie Hummel and all them. A lot of my family went to Purdue. My mom never really pushed me to be a Purdue fan or an I.U. fan. I was just a basketball fan when I was a kid. I know the rivalries are super intense, and once I got here, I really actually felt it from just everybody. I know they had a little streak on us, so, yeah.

**Q. I just wanted to get your guys' thoughts on Michael Durr and the minutes he gave you tonight, especially against the frontline.**

XAVIER JOHNSON: Before the game I told Mike, actually, it's going to be your day, and you know how Trayce was actually feeling, so Mike was actually going to be ready to play. Coach told him that he was going to go to him and be ready. For a player not to play as much as he has been in the past and to come out here and compete with those guys in the top five team in the nation, it shows a lot.

**Q. Rob on Michael real quick.**

ROB PHINISEE: I'll answer. Big Mike, just his spirit in practice really. He came from a program where he played 20, 30 minutes a game and then he hasn't really been playing that much. We have Trayce Jackson-Davis. Him just staying ready, coming in and guarding and just his spark. The little mid-range he hit was huge, and just his energy and leadership he brings to the table is really big for us.

**Q. Rob, when you get picked up at center court there basically at the end in that mob, how did that happen? Where were you? What was it like? Who picked you up? What can you tell us about that experience right there?**

ROB PHINISEE: I was trying to make my way through the crowd to my teammates, and then once we got all in a circle, I think it was X actually who started it. X tried to pick me up and Trayce picked me up, and all the teammates picked me up. Just a surreal experience I won't forget. I just love my teammates, and I love Indiana University.