

# Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

## Coach Mike Woodson

### Press Conference



**Q. You guys, really sort of the first stretch during the Big Ten season, where you had a little bit of a gap between games from Saturday to Saturday, how productive has that been in regards to getting legs fresh and maybe putting some new things in?**

COACH WOODSON: I don't know if we've got legs fresh because we've been practicing. We've had a day off because it's mandatory. We might have had two days off, I think, this week because of the NCAA rules.

But we had a good practice yesterday. I was able to add a few things. And we've just kind of have been film watching, watching Illinois and trying to prepare for them.

**Q. I was listening to Brad Underwood earlier today. He said they've seen just about everything when it comes to defending Kofi, from doubling to respecting shooters because they can play inside and out. What are you seeing when it comes to dealing with their inside/out attack?**

COACH WOODSON: Same thing. There's no big secret. It's what it is. And this last game, they milked him until they couldn't milk him no more, in terms of throwing it into him and him dominating the inside game. I mean, that's where their strengths are.

I thought Wisconsin played him fairly well early. But Wisconsin made shots early. And then second half they just couldn't make any shots. And it was kind of like a one-man show with him dominating the paint.

So, I mean, listen, he's not going to disappear on us. We know we've got to play him. And we've got to play guys on the perimeter.

Purdue had the same kind of set up in terms of perimeter play and two big guys. And it was a battle. I mean, Kofi is good. I mean, he's NBA-ready. That's kind of how I look at it. And we're going to have to play him.

I mean, you just can't run from him. We've got to commit

ourselves to playing him and playing the guys that are out on the perimeter.

**Q. You touched a little bit on the guards and the perimeter players. What is it that they do so well that that group that makes Illinois so difficult to defend if you do double down on Kofi?**

COACH WOODSON: If you watched their team last year, their spacing was not like it is this year. They are more spaced out this year, which makes it more difficult to even double team and get back to the shooters.

Last year I thought they were more condensed in terms of how they ran their offense. And he's kind of opened it up a little more, I think, this year in watching him.

But they've got guys that can make shots. They're averaging I think eight, nine 3s a game. And so you're going to have to deal with both of them. I don't know how you can get around it.

So our defensive attackers have just got to be on par in terms of being able to fight him inside. And then we've got to scramble to get the shooters. We've got to do that as well.

**Q. Talking about the guards for Illinois, Plummer and Frazier, having to stay in front of them and stay out of foul trouble as well, Xavier of course a big part of what you're doing offensively, how important he stay out in front of those guys, but all guards for Indiana, stay out of foul trouble?**

COACH WOODSON: Let's see if we can get them in foul trouble. That's how I look at it. I don't know. Again, we've played against good guards, guys, this year. And Frazier and Plummer are very talented guards.

And, again, we can't run from it; we've got to play them. We've got to keep them in front of us, we've got to defend the 3 and we've got to defend their inside game. I mean, they've got the total package. And we've got to defend it if we're going to give ourselves a chance to win.



**Q. On Xavier, I know you've been asked about him a lot lately, but what were your initial impressions of him when you started recruiting him when you got the job? What did you like about his game at that point and what did you feel like you had to fix? And how far do you think he's become being in the direction of the point guard you want him to be?**

COACH WOODSON: When we watched him early the fact he averaged 13, 14 points a game was intriguing in that league. And we knew his style of play. He was kind of up and down and kind of sporadic a little bit.

And he was more X versus his surrounding parts. So that's been my whole theme since getting him is trying to get him to understand really the dynamics of what a point guard's responsibility is. You've got to have Coach Woodson's point guard mentality and know when to pull out X's mentality when it's time to do that.

And I think all great point guards figure that out after a while -- hey, this is how Woody wants us to play. But I've got to be able to sometime break Woody's stuff and venture out and do what I think I can do best. And I've never tied his hands.

But, again, he's got to learn pick-and-roll plays and who hasn't had a shot or how you go about getting a guy a shot. That's what great point guards do. And I think things now for him are starting to slow down a little bit, and we're starting to reap a little of those benefits, I think.

**Q. Michael Durr has not played the last couple games. Is there something going on with him physically or is he available, a guy you can deploy on Kofi?**

COACH WOODSON: I just didn't play those few games. It was coach's decision. I think I have that right if I don't feel like playing the guy.

But this is the game he's got to be ready. That's all I'm going to tell you, because we've got a monster in the middle that somebody's got to deal with him. So be ready.

**Q. Going back to, in particular, sort of defending the way Illinois goes inside/out, where is Rob? Do you anticipate him potentially being available for this game?**

COACH WOODSON: No, Rob will not be available. To be honest, I don't know when Rob is coming back for a while. He's got a plantar fasciitis problem. And we've got to nurse him back. So, next man up. He won't be back for this game.

**Q. What do you feel about noon games on Saturday, especially with times off in regards to guys having a really good energy level and being ready to go early games like that? Does it matter?**

COACH WOODSON: It doesn't matter to me. My thing is we've had some early games. I can't recall the games, but I know there might have been one early game that we came out flat.

And we can't have that against Illinois. We've got to come out ready to play, just like we were ready to play, I thought, in the Maryland game. Even though they jumped us, we were still engaged and ready.

I thought the Penn State game, we were really ready to play. Purdue game, we were ready to play. We can't be flat. We've got to come out ready to compete for 40 minutes because they're going to force you to do that.

**Q. Trayce had foul trouble going against Purdue going against their bigs. Is there anything that came out of that film that you think he needs to focus on against Cockburn tomorrow?**

COACH WOODSON: When he played big fellow Edey, you can't give these guys angles. I mean, it's tough enough when they are so huge. And if you let them get so low, I just think he's going to have to fight just like Mike, whoever has to play them. They're going to have to just fight and hope for the best.

I mean, I don't know how we're going to -- I'm not giving up our defensive schemes, but the guy's a load. And I don't think any big in college basketball that plays low post play, if you give him angles, then you're in the catch-up position all night. And I thought the two fouls that Tray picked up early against Edey was because he gave him some angles and he tried to get back after he got the ball and it was just too late.

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