

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

Thursday, February 24, 2022

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Xavier Johnson

Race Thompson

Postgame Media Conference



Indiana 74, Maryland 64

Q. ..spring even the beginning of the season being that guy just recognizing it's got to be me that's the guy to go to in the post tonight?

XAVIER JOHNSON: We know when Trayce or Race are going, we're going to go back to them. And as a point guard, that's on me for running the play for them. When they're going, we're going to give them the ball. And coach, he preaches that.

Q. Xavier, I know getting this losing streak behind you guys is one thing. But 7 for 7 from the field, 3 for 3 from 3, 7 for 8 from the line. How much did that hurt to miss that last one?

XAVIER JOHNSON: It hurt. I was tired, but it hurt.

Q. X, you've talked a bunch of time this season about slowing the game down for yourself. Was this one of the better examples of that? How did you manage to slow down and see everything that was out there?

XAVIER JOHNSON: I mean, like I said, when I got downhill, called the ball screens early, I mean, I saw it was opening up. And I got my teammates involved early. And they were actually hitting shots. Me and Parker will have a talk. But I know he'll be ready for next game. I'll be getting the ball to him.

Q. Race, X isn't going to pitch a perfect game every night. (Xavier knocked on table) But how much better are you guys when he is that good? When he's on like he was tonight RACE THOMPSON: We're definitely going to be hard to beat. When you get X going, that's the head of a snake, for real. You might say Trayce is the head of the snake, but it's really X. We really go as he goes because he gets everybody involved. He gets everybody shots. And then when he goes 7 for 7 from the field, I mean, that's really tough to beat. Your point

guard is getting whatever he got, 24 points or whatever, it's just going to be a hard team to beat.

Q. Race, what does it mean for the losing streak to be over? And how can this kind of effort, full effort, offense, defense, propel you down the stretch?

RACE THOMPSON: Definitely a little bit of weight off of our shoulders. We've got to play with a chip though. But we've got to keep building. We played well tonight. I think in the past we had been playing good basketball, but we just had to play 40 minutes, not 38 minutes, not 39 minutes. We put a full 40 together tonight. But, I mean, definitely feels good to get off that streak. And hopefully we can put a couple more together.

Q. Xavier, I know some of your coaches in the past have said that they feel like you draw motivation off of being doubted or being told that you can't do something. I guess in a season like this, there's been kind of ups and downs. How much has, you know, being doubted kind of act as a source of motivation for you?

XAVIER JOHNSON: I mean, as a person, as a kid, as it goes around social media, I see a lot of what a lot of people say. And I'm an emotional player. I see it a lot. I know it really doesn't matter, you're not supposed to read it. But at the end of the day, I mean, I'm a person, and I'm going to read it. But it's a matter of how you use it. That's what I'm going to say.

Q. Race, the way you guys attacked tonight, you came out. It was obvious that the plan was to pound the ball inside and you did very well. How much did that help open up X and open the offense for you guys continuously throughout the night down there?

RACE THOMPSON: That's our game plan a lot of the time. Go to me and Trayce. And then once, hopefully, we can get going, one of us gets going, then once we get going, it opens up the court for everybody because then the defense starts crowding down on us. We're unselfish players, so we're going to kick it out to our open teammates. They either knock down the shot or like X did



not tonight, get downhill and find somebody else that's open and they get an open shot or he gets a lay-up even. So it definitely helps our team out a lot.

Q. Race, can you elaborate a little bit on what you were saying about, you know, ending the streak? Did you guys talk about it at all going into this game, say we got to get this one? We've got to put ourselves straight before the tournament? Things like that?

RACE THOMPSON: I mean, we want to play in the tournament. None of us have ever played in the tournament. And that's a goal we're all trying to reach as a unit.

But, I mean, yeah, we definitely knew we were on a little five game skid. It was hard every single day coming to practice working. And we know we're right there, right there to win the game.

So I think that that just gave us motivation in practice yesterday. And we came in today and we showed up ready to play. And that's how we got the win.

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