

# Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

## Head Coach Mike Woodson

Postgame Media Conference



Indiana 74, Maryland 64

MIKE WOODSON: ...two point guards sitting on the sideline watching it with me. And for him to step up like he did and have the game after picking up two early fouls, man, I mean, you couldn't have asked for a better performance. I'm very pleased.

**Q. You've talked about challenging Race basically since you got here and how much he's improved. How much have you seen him improve in particular at maybe recognizing in the course of a game -- Trayce has foul trouble or the defense is taking him away or whatever -- I've got to be the man in the post there, I've got to be the man that demands the ball, gets buckets, gets rebounds, just is kind of, you know, 1A down there in the post?**

MIKE WOODSON: He's been that guy kind of all season for us. I know he was a little down after the -- we all were after the Ohio State game. And for him to bounce back like he did and have the kind of game he had tonight, man, we're going to need that from everybody as we finish the season off.

I mean, you know, this was a big -- big win for our team tonight I thought. I mean, you lose five straight, man, and you're searching a little bit, you know, trying to figure out when you're going to stop the bleeding. And I thought tonight, boy, we stepped up and did what we had to do.

**Q. Mike, you guys have struggled in the second half of a lot of games this year. But tonight 15 for 20 from the field. Very efficient offensively. Best half of the year from an efficiency standpoint. How good did that feel to come out and close that thing out the way they did?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, it felt good. You know, I don't know how it's -- I mean, we've had some games where we've come out in the second half and been great. But as of late, I mean, man, when you lose five games in a row, man, you're searching as a team. These guys are not quitting. I'm telling you that now. They just -- they're

competing every night. And that's all we can ask for, man. We try to put them in the best position possible. And I thought tonight they answered the bell big time.

**Q. To keep going on that theme. What did you see -- have you seen sort of an attitude change in the last couple of days? It seems like they've reached a point of being angry, tired of losing and sort of took it out on Maryland.**

MIKE WOODSON: Our attitude has been great. Even in the five game skid, mean. I mean, guys you don't come out and, you know, take Ohio State on the road to overtime if you're not mentally and physically ready to compete. I mean, we've been competing.

I mean, we lost a close game here at home against Wisconsin. I mean, our guys are competing. And that's -- from a coaching standpoint and our staff, that's all you can ask for, man. I mean, a play or two here or there, those two games we probably wouldn't be having this conversation. But at the end of the day, they're not quitting. And that's nice to see.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about your two foul strategy with Trayce and Xavier. Is that kind of set in stone for you or more of a feel?**

MIKE WOODSON: Listen, it's kind of a feel. I mean, I'm still learning these guys. I mean, I don't know -- I think sometimes coaches have to have trust to make sure -- you know, Trayce has never really fouled out of the -- I can't recall in past years Trayce even being in foul trouble.

But, you know, at the end of the day, it's a long game early. So for him to pick up three or X. I can't go anywhere with X. You know, I don't have another point guard out there. So you got to sit him down.

So I think it was the right move for both of them. Give other guys an opportunity to step up and play.

**Q. Yeah. I was going to follow up on that, talk about maybe some of the -- you know, being able to tread water. You had a really good defensive stretch there**



**with the two starters out. You were able to build the lead to eight. I know you didn't close the half well. But what did it mean for guys like Geronimo and Durr and Leal to kind of step in and give you something during that stretch?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, again, I can't play Trayce and Race, you know, even X, I mean, I can't play them 40 minutes. So those guys -- again, I've always said everybody's a part of this team that wears a uniform plays a role. And if you play two minutes, you better make it the most important minutes to help us win games, you know.

And I thought in that stretch when we had the second unit in there -- we couldn't rebound the ball -- and they were able to take an 8 point lead and I believe they tied it. You know, I mean, we go in three -- up three at half, and they're right there.

But for the most part, again, it was a total team effort, man, and I'm pleased as hell.

**Q. Coach, do you feel like Xavier is someone that puts like a lot of pressure on himself? And I guess how have you tried to help him balance that line between playing with intensity but not forcing things?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, I think all these young players put pressure on themselves. If they could just stay out of the paper and leave social media alone, they might be a lot better.

You know, I mean, again, X means well. He wants to be great. He plays -- he competes, man. He's a competitor. That's what he does. And he's had his ups and downs, man.

But for the most part, man, listen, this is the first time he and I have had an opportunity as coach/player to get together, man. I'm pleased at how he's played this year. He's come a long way from the beginning when we started to where he is today. When I see things like that, that means he's put in time and he's working.

**Q. Mike, when Xavier was in here, he said he knows that he shouldn't read social media but he does sometimes. How much have you been able to get through to any of your guys on not looking at it?**

MIKE WOODSON: Not a lot. (Laughter.)

No, really not a lot. I don't know how the social media thing works because, guys, I don't -- you know, I think the university kind of handles my thing. And I couldn't tell you what they -- what people are saying or what's being said on

our part. I don't have time for that.

My time is watching film and trying to get prepared to play basketball. And these guys should do the same. I mean, you know, I tell them all, leave social media alone, man. Concentrate on your studies and playing basketball. That's what you came to school for. But it's not that easy.

**Q. All right, Coach. Thank you.**

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