

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Mike Woodson

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. I guess by scoring margin, Michigan was your worst loss of the season. You were pretty open after the game you didn't like the intensity your team had in that game. Is that something you have been talking about openly this week, you just didn't bring it that game?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, you would think after the big game we had against Purdue, everybody would be sky high. I mean, I think we came out with great intentions to play hard, but we just didn't sustain it.

After watching the film again, we did nothing right in that game, I mean, on both endings of the floor. Our defensive coverages were awful. It was one of those games where I just thought we didn't show up to play. They took advantage of it on both ends of the floor.

Q. Hunter Dickinson obviously hurt you guys in that last matchup. Is the preparation for him any different? Are you approaching his skill set in a different way this time around?

MIKE WOODSON: Again, our bigs are going to just have to play him. I thought he had his way. He was very boisterous about it. He came in and had a monster game. You're not going to beat that team if you don't slow him down. So we're going to have to do a better job on him to the point where he can't dominate like he did. I thought that was the difference.

Yeah, they made threes, but I just thought he was the X factor. He did whatever the hell he wanted to do. We just can't let that happen again.

Q. When you kind of look back at that first matchup, was there anything that you can really take away from that and say, Hey, we did X, Y and Z okay, we can build off of that? Do you flush the tape and take this as a new game?

MIKE WOODSON: It wasn't pretty watching again yesterday, I tell you that. I think we just got to start fresh and regroup. Again, we hadn't had really any games like that. I mean, you think about it, we hit the first shot to start the second half, cut it to six. That was as close as we ever got again.

You got to give Michigan a lot of credit, man. They came in here, made shots. The big fella was huge. We had no answer for it.

We got to eliminate the shots that they made here and we got to do a better job on Dickinson.

Q. You're kind of in a must-win place, but you're going to be playing multiple games. How do you balance that out with your bench versus having to win that game?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, you can't worry about the second game until you win the first game. I mean, I've been playing seven, eight guys. I know Michigan is going to probably play six to seven guys at the most, significant minutes. I know their first unit along with Terrence Williams off the bench, they basically occupy all the minutes.

When I go to the bench, I got to make sure that we're doing what we have to do. In these tournaments, just in Big Ten play alone, you can be down 4, 5 points, and that can turn into 10, 12 points right away if you don't have key players on the floor.

I just got to watch that closely and see where we are.

Q. You've talked about the kids staying off the social media. With all that's at stake here of needing to win, how do you balance keeping their minds, the mental aspect, keeping that stuff out and just focusing on what they need to do? There's been so many times at the end of games where the season could have been changed in a moment. What do you do to keep them focused on what they need to do and eliminating the outside noise?

MIKE WOODSON: I wish I had the answer for that, really I do, in terms of these guys just staying away from it.

Once they leave me, go to class, spend time with their friends, teammates, once they're away from the arena, the gym, social media plays a major role, man. You can't control it.

All I can do is when they're here, talk to them about it, try to push them in the right direction in terms of what's in front of us, what's staring us in the face. At the end of the day we got to win. I've known that the last two weeks.

We've lost two tough games. You figure if you win one, maybe both of them, you and I wouldn't be having this conversation about trying to get into the tournament play. We just would be worrying about the Big Ten tournament.

We just got to stay positive. I got to continue to push 'em these next two days to get us ready for Thursday.

Q. What has the adjustment been like for you going from the NBA to college basketball in terms of the timeout situation? You're used to having more in the NBA, but not used to so many predetermined media timeouts.

MIKE WOODSON: I am so used to so many timeouts. The other night I used them all because I was trying to kill the run. I ran out of timeouts.

But a place like Purdue, I don't regret what I did because it gets crazy in there. We could have easily gone from 10 to 20 in that building.

I got to just work closely with my coaching staff to make sure that I at least have one coming down the homestretch in case we got to dribble the ball up, I can get it in the front court.

But, I mean, again, I don't think that that beat us the other night. I personally don't think that. We had our shots. I mean, Parker makes the three, now the pressure's back on them being up one, us having to get one stop.

But I got to get better. My coaches have got to help me a little bit more and I got to get better in terms of figuring out the timeouts because we don't have as many as we did when I was in the NBA. I got to work on that.

Q. I think Trey stretched and warmed up on Saturday, didn't play. As you prepare for a team like Michigan that can challenge you from the wing, hybrid spots, do you think he might be available? How important would he be defensively if he was available?

MIKE WOODSON: Again, he played in the game, the first game. I mean, I just didn't think any of our guys played great in that game. We were awful I thought.

Yes, we need him. He's been a big piece of the puzzle. We knew that coming into the season. He and Rob both. Rob has missed 10 games. Now I think he's up to 13, 14 games, Trey.

It hurts that they've missed the games because, again, we were counting on those guys to be a part of it. I mean, if he's able to come back, I'm going to accept him with open arms. We need bodies. He's been pretty good when he's been in uniform and on the floor for us.

But I don't know if he's even going to come back. I'm going to be honest with you guys. He hasn't really been able to practice.

Again, my theme has always been the next guy's got to be ready to play. That's all we can do at this point.

Q. You've coached basketball for a long time at the highest level. You've talked a lot this season about getting these guys offense the hump, teaching them how to win. Is there one or two things you can point to late in games that's not happening that needs to happen? Is it just as simple as not making a shot when you're open or a turnover?

MIKE WOODSON: I don't think there's anything you can point to. I mean, you put them in the best position possible. You try to.

I mean, when I look at the other night, 17 seconds, hey, we executed the hell out of the play, but we came up empty. We didn't make the shot. I mean, it was a wide-open shot. Underneath out of bounds, we've executed that play where Trey has gotten the lob, Phinisee has hit the jump shot in the corner as well as Parker against Rutgers.

Why Miller threw the ball low versus throwing the ball high? He was wide open. You can't explain those situations. As a coach, you go through it with them just like they experienced it.

I think when you start consistently finishing plays like that and the win comes behind it, then it becomes natural. We've just had so many miscues coming down the homestretch. Ohio State, we leave a guy open under the bucket. Well, we don't teach that, but hell, it happened. That was probably the biggest play of that game. I mean, you can name them all.

If you win those games, they're in a good place mentally in terms of moving forward each time they're in that position. We haven't won 'em. So we keep making some of the same mistakes, missing some wide-open shots that other teams seem to make against us.

It's one of those things. We've just got to keep working our way through it.

Q. The approach you went to offensively against Purdue, spreading things out, putting the ball in X's hands, is that something that's translatable down the road? Is that going to be a game-by-game thing?

MIKE WOODSON: If you watched my New York teams, that's kind of how we played. But I had multiple guys that could handle the ball and play pick'n roll basketball.

It's probably the first time since I've been here with our offense we've been able to open the floor up like that because I saw something based on what Painter and them were doing defensively.

But you still got to be able to make shots behind opening the floor. You got to be able to throw the lob, which we were able to do, getting Trey some dunks or layups in that regard.

When you open the floor up, there's a lot of things that come into play based on how the defense is playing. I mean, everybody plays it pretty much in college. But I hadn't gone to it that much because we just -- a lot of teams just sit in. Purdue, they tagged from the backside, and their bigs just stay in the paint. It gave us the pocket pass, it gave us the throwback based on the tag. A lot of teams don't play us that way. That's why we hadn't run it that much.

But you still got to make shots when you open the floor like that. I thought we had some good looks again. Miller was pretty damn good in it the other night. That's not to say we won't exploit it again. A lot of it is how the defense is playing us.

THE MODERATOR: Guys, thank you. We'll see you in Indianapolis.

MIKE WOODSON: Guys, take care.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports