

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Trayce Jackson-Davis

Press Conference



Q. Trayce, Second-Team All-Big Ten was just announced. I know it's been an up-and-down season for you, but how do you reflect on that and that honor?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: Honestly, my biggest goal this year wasn't to win accolades. It was to help our team get into the tournament. I was on the First Team last year, so it is what it is. I don't really care.

I think it's still an honor, but at the same time, I'm here to try to help us win. We've got a Big Ten tournament to worry about, so I'm worried about that.

Q. Last game against Michigan, Hunter Dickinson had a big game against you guys. What do you have to do defensively this time around to have more success guarding him?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: I think that a big thing for us, I think our ball screen defense wasn't very well that game. Then our veers weren't really well. Basically, when they came off screens, if our guards get hit, we were supposed to switch and we didn't switch, so it let them have wide-open shots, and he was hitting them. That's going to be big for us, taking him away, because he was hot from the three-point line that game, and he's been shooting the ball really well.

Q. With the Big Ten tournament and you guys kind of being on the NCAA tournament bubble, I'm just kind of curious from a player's view, do you kind of look at it and say, okay, we've got to win one, we've got to win two? Do you pay attention to the bubble on purpose? Do you hear all the talk naturally? What's it like from a player's view walking into this situation?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: It's a must-win because Michigan at the same time, nothing's set in stone, especially with all these upsets that are happening in these conference tournaments with the mid-major teams. We've still got to go out and prepare, but we're trying to go win the tournament.

Michigan is the first team on our schedule. We've got to worry about them. They're playing really well. They just beat Ohio State, who's a great team, at Ohio State. So we're going to have to go out there and fight and try to get a W.

Q. As far as life on the NCAA tournament bubble, is that conversation that you have in the locker room?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: Absolutely. I think everyone in our locker room knows how much we need this game, and they're willing to do anything to win. We know where we stand, and we know that we have to go get this one.

Q. Trayce, the first time you played Michigan was very emotional; you were coming off of the Purdue game. This time is emotional in a different way. Mentally you guys have to -- it's almost like a one-and-done type of feel. What does that do mentally to you in your preparation for this game?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: You've just got to -- you've still got to -- you can't let the pressure get to you, of course, first and foremost. We're coming off of a Purdue team that we just took down to the wire. That was great team. Probably going to be a 1 seed when it's all said and done.

But at the same time, Michigan is a team that we came off that Purdue game and we were on a high, and we came in and they were maybe 13-10, 12-9, something. Their record wasn't very good. So we took them for granted, and they came in here and they spanked us.

Just trying to get revenge, and we've got to play harder and we've got to play better because I know how good we are as a team. If we play together, I know we can win.

Q. Just thinking back to the way you guys played offense against Purdue, you set a lot of high ball screens, you got a lot of rolls and dives to the rim. What's your comfort level with that style of play versus more back to the basket?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: That's how it plays actually is something I'm very used to, using my athleticism, getting



behind the bigs for lobs or easy dunks. I think that's the same with Xavier. I think Xavier is really good at spreading the floor and making the right plays.

I think it's going to be big for us moving forward. I've kind of talked to Coach, and less back to the basket and more running out and setting ball screens.

Q. Curious, the late-game stuff for you guys where there's this, as Coach Woodson says, inability to get over the hump, what do you see when you guys go back and watch film as a team? Is it just the small details, the small things that aren't happening at the end? What do you kind of see as the biggest factors leading to these late-game situations where you guys just can't finish out a game?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: I just think it's always just coming down to one possession, just one possession that can kill you. We had one possession, it was one possession against Purdue, one possession against Rutgers. Those last possessions, we've got to be the most locked-in team and the most ready team, whether it be one stop or to execute a play. We've got to just be able to do that.

Q. You mentioned just there wanting to be a little bit less back to the basket. Actually we asked you a couple weeks ago about shooting maybe fewer jump shots than you were maybe expecting to this year and adding that part of your game. When you look throughout your career, what's this balance been like of trying to do things that more, I guess, show an expansion of your game but also trying to balance what's best for the team in that moment and what's the easiest way of getting your two points when you need them?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: I'm just listening to what Coach Woodson's saying. Basically we draw direct ATL plays and plays in the huddle, and then our offense is mostly where I'm back to the basket. So I'm just listening to what he's doing, and if it's going to put us in the best position to win, I'm just listening to what he says.

I think that most of the games it's worked because we've been two points, one point away from winning, especially against these teams that are top-25 teams. So I feel like we're doing the right things. We've just got to get over the hump, what he says basically.

Q. You had talked about before basically how you don't view pressure as something negative, as I guess only a positive thing. Where did you get that mindset from? Is there someone that taught you that, or is that

something that you kind of had to figure out on your own?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: Actually, our strength coach said, pressure is a privilege. So it's a privilege to be put in this situation, and maybe it's not always a good thing, but a lot of people wish they were in this position. Even though we're fighting on the bubble of the NCAA Tournament, we're still here, and we have pressure to perform. A lot of teams are looking in from the outside, and they have no chance of making it unless they win the tournament, which is up in the air.

So just for us to be in the position that we're in and still to be able to make the tournament by winning one or two games is really big for us. Yeah, you can view it as a negative thing, but it's not going to help you. So I just try to take that pressure and just help me perform.

Q. You and I think it's Iverson Molinar, Mississippi State, are the only two Power Five guys to score 500 points each of the last two seasons. Obviously if only two guys do, then it's a really small group. Why do you think you've been able to be that productive two years in a row?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: I just think that it's my coaches and my teammates honestly. My coaches put me in positions that help me score the ball, and then my teammates help me facilitate the ball to me, put me in the right positions. It's obviously all credit to them.

I've been blessed to play here the last three years and then the last two years being able to show my abilities a little bit more in scoring the ball and doing stuff of that nature. It's been a really fun experience.

Still got more work to do, and we'll see what happens here in the future.

Q. You can't tweet anything out about this question I'm going to ask him until after 1:00. Trayce, could you give your thoughts to being named to the All-Defensive Team in the Big Ten?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: I just think it's another way that I've showcased my abilities on the defensive end of the floor, especially with blocking shots, being able to step over and help block shots because I wasn't able to do that the last two years. I knew I was always capable of it because I did it in high school.

It's really an honor and a blessing. J.D.'s talked about it. He said that it's been a while since someone's been named from Indiana on the Big Ten team, or defensive team. I

think it's a really cool honor.

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