

# Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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## Race Thompson Press Conference



**Q. Race, I'm going to ask you the same thing I asked Trayce. The first time you guys played Michigan, it was very emotional. You were coming off of a big win over Purdue and that may have sucked some of the energy out. This is a different situation mentally. You guys have to be focused because now you're in almost a one-and-done situation as far as getting into the NCAA Tournament. How mentally are you guys preparing and focusing in that regard?**

RACE THOMPSON: I think as a team we know what we have to do. Again, we're coming into a different tournament and going to win it.

We're focused on Michigan right now, and that's a team we believe we can beat on any given night. Last time we played them we were riding a little bit hot, and you can't do that, otherwise you'll get beat in the Big Ten. We're ready to play and excited to get down there.

**Q. Kind of keeping it going on that, one thing I guess they were able to do last time was obviously spread you guys out, get you sort of in scramble situations and kind of get open shots against rotations. What in particular needs to be better there? I guess if you guys have studied that tape, what did you look and see breakdowns on and how do you go about fixing those and making sure they're not getting as many open shots?**

RACE THOMPSON: I think we weren't ourselves that game on either end of the floor. We weren't playing our defense correctly. We watched the film yesterday and have been watching it today and will probably watch some more tomorrow.

Looking back at it, we really weren't playing like ourselves on defense or on offense. Again, I think that just goes to feeling a little bit too good about ourselves. I think that if we can play defense how we've been playing it the past week or two, we'll be in good shape.

**Q. A lot of people made the assumption on Senior**

**Night with the emotion that you showed, the way you talked, the way Woodson talked about you, that your decision has kind of been made. I'm just curious if you could just sort of explain sort of where are you at in your process? And do you have at least in your mind an idea of what next year's going to look like for you?**

RACE THOMPSON: I haven't made any decision yet if I'm leaving or if I'm coming back. Either-or, it's up in the air. Yeah, it was emotional because I'm in the unknown. Coming off an emotional game, the feelings I had towards my teammates, towards my managers, towards my coaches, towards the fans is really -- if that was my last game in Assembly Hall, it's definitely an emotional one.

But again, it's very possible I could be coming back. Again, it's just really up in the air.

**Q. The other question I had, as far as you guys entering the Big Ten tournament, life on the bubble, the NCAA Tournament bubble, Trayce said that, yeah, it's out there. Everybody talks about it. What's it like as a player? Do you look at it day to day, the bracketology? Do you talk about it? Do you try to avoid it when you can? Give me a player's view of how you guys handle that.**

RACE THOMPSON: You can't really avoid it. It's what we do. We play college basketball. We watch college basketball all day. If you're watching the game, you're hearing about it and everything.

Again, I said it before, we know what we have to do in order to get where we want to go, which is to the NCAA Tournament. Again, we're going to Indy to win the Big Ten tournament, and we all believe we can do that. We've just got to figure out a way to finish these games.

Yeah, we see it. I heard Trayce say pressure is a privilege, and I mean it really is. We're really excited to get to Indy.

**Q. Race, I guess going back to the first time you guys played Michigan -- and you've talked about it, I think, sort of in a couple different ways -- but they've got those big-bodied wing players, Houston on the floor,**



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**Williams on the bench, maybe even sometimes in some ways a guy like Diabate. How do you change the ways you approach them when they can throw more size at you offensively sometimes with their bigger lineups than you might be able to throw at them defensively, kind of a mix of size and athleticism?**

RACE THOMPSON: Again, it just comes down to how hard you play. I played the five last year, and I think I did a good job guarding the five. It really just comes down to the efforts you're willing to put in. I think that going to Indy we're putting -- we've got to go balls to the wall and give all we've got every game.

They've got big guys. So do we. We'll be ready when it comes down to it.

**Q. What do you think has been different about Xavier the last few weeks, and how do you guys kind of try to feed off that, off his energy and what he's providing for the offense?**

RACE THOMPSON: He's been really good for us. He's the head of the snake, in my eyes. We go as he goes. I mean, he's been really locked in in practice watching film, putting extra work in, and just keeping his head down and just staying focused on the team and how he can do his best to make our team better.

I think we can get him to keep doing that for the rest of the season then we'll be a tough team to beat.

**Q. I'm sure you're not in the mood for moral victories of any sort, but did that game on Saturday at Purdue, one of the best teams in the country, a tough place to play, did that do anything positive for you guys just knowing that, hey, man, we competed, we were right there?**

RACE THOMPSON: I mean, you could say that about a lot of games this season. I mean, we're really in most of the games right up until the end. We know we can beat these teams. We've just got to really figure out a way to beat them. I wouldn't say it gave us confidence because we didn't win the game, but we know we can play with anybody in the country any given night. I don't think that's new based off our last game. I mean, we all know that.

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