

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Rob Phinisee

Press Conference



Q. Can you just talk a little bit about your excitement level? Obviously potentially being your last season here going into potentially your last few games and finally breaking through and getting into the NCAA Tournament.

ROB PHINISEE: Yeah, super excited. Just not knowing if we were going to be in the tournament going into the Big Ten Tournament was huge. Just those two games were huge for us, and everyone is just looking forward to going down to Dayton and playing against Wyoming because everyone knows we haven't been to the tournament since 2016 so it's huge for our state, huge for our fan base, and everyone is just looking forward to it.

Q. How would you describe this feeling? When you're watching, I imagine you guys probably thought you were safer. Did you get nervous? And what was your reaction knowing that you were in but you are going to have to play in Dayton in two days?

ROB PHINISEE: Yeah, we were super nervous, just super anxious just because we were the last region. Every time a region came up we thought we were going to get chose, so we were the last region, everyone just super anxious about it. But yeah, everyone is just super excited, and now we just have to get right to work and get ready because quick turnaround against Wyoming in Dayton, and guys are just super excited and ready to go.

Q. I think UCLA came out of the First Four last year. Is that something for you guys to hang your hat on and talk about as a team?

ROB PHINISEE: Yeah, I mean, that was something that was actually spoken even before the Big Ten Tournament, how like our season is not over yet and no matter what happens you can always make a run at the end of the season.

Yeah, we know what happened last year with UCLA, and right now we're just focused on Wyoming and just looking forward to that game.

Q. How much has the confidence level of this team changed in just the last couple of weeks?

ROB PHINISEE: So much. Just that Michigan game, that first half, everyone saw the first half, but then the second half, just since then everything has changed. Everyone is building off that momentum. Even though we had a tough one against Iowa yesterday, everyone was still building off that momentum because we're playing really good basketball right now and we feel like Tuesday we want to play just because we're playing really well right now. Yeah, we're just going to carry that over to Tuesday.

Q. You guys are the group that gets Indiana back in the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 2016. Why do you think this group was able to do it? What were the big keys for you guys getting this done this year?

ROB PHINISEE: I would say togetherness. It really started in June when we came together and then leading into that Bahamas trip, I feel like that really helped us, just being able to practice together and just going out of the country and just experiencing different things.

I feel like we're a really tight-knit group. Guys get along on and off the court. I feel like everyone at the end of the day just wants to win, so that's why I feel like we're winning this year.

Q. As it turned out you guys absolutely had to win the two games this week to get in. How gratifying is that, that you guys after losing seven of nine in the regular season found that resolve to get that done?

ROB PHINISEE: It's super satisfying. Our goal was to win the Big Ten Championship going into it. I mean, I feel like all of our losses this year we could have won. Everyone knows we can compete with anybody in the country, and like you said, those two wins were huge, and we're just going to carry that momentum over to Tuesday.

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