

# Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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## Tamar Bates

### Press Conference



**Q. Obviously we haven't seen you, congratulations on the birth of your daughter and I wanted to ask about that, what's it been like to navigate that as a college athlete, being a father, but how has she inspired you?**

TAMAR BATES: Thank you, first off and I mean, for me, it's just puts me in a whole different state of mind. I'm talking as soon as I saw her, it's kind of like just a flip switch. Now, everything that I'm doing, all the work that I'm putting in, it's not just for me. I want to provide for her and my family. It's like getting up, those early mornings, late nights and doing everything that I've been doing, I'm a lot more focused because I have a purpose, I would say.

It's been beautiful in terms of and a navigating; it's been pretty easy, because it's two different things, basketball and being a dad. There's lessons in both of them that help me with the other. But you know, it hasn't been too difficult, being a father and being a college athlete.

**Q. Hope you're doing well. A lot of the talk this summer so far has been surrounding the expectations and the jump you'll make heading into season. What are some of the areas of your game you've seen improve the most after the last cup al of months here?**

TAMAR BATES: I would say first off, my body, like my overall strength, just the weight that I've put on. The goal was to get to 200 pounds and I hit that this summer.

Other than that, just on the court, I would say making plays with the basketball and not turning it over, being a guy to relieve some of the pressure, help them play off a ball and some of the offense -- making open shots. You know, and then you know, passing the ball.

But I would say I've always been able to create my own shot and get to my spots but I feel like where I really need to improve is my ball handling, decision-making and being able to take on some of that leading guard role and help some of the other guys we have.

**Q. Curious, last season, obviously up and down for**

**you in terms of how you shot the ball. What was the biggest thing you took away from the experience you got last season and what do you feel like you can use from those ups and downs last season to propel you forward as you prepare for your second year?**

TAMAR BATES: I mean, I feel like the only thing that could really prepare you for college basketball is college basketball. The same goes for you go to the NBA and the next level.

So I feel like just going through that storm, that just obviously just a stronger basketball player but I came out stronger mentally because I know it's not -- everything is not going to go my way personally this year or the team's way, like how we kind of script it to so just going through that and figuring out, okay, that's where I'm going to get my shots from and this is how things are going to go. I went through the Big Ten, just real ly just getting a feel for everything that I was kind of anticipating last year coming in.

So I feel like having that experience under my belt will help with everything.

I'm a basketball player and shooters shoot. I'm going to shoot the ball and just have confidence and believe in my teammates, trust each other and work on our game. There's going to be ups and downs, but we'll make the shots.

**Q. Congrats on becoming a father. I understand your daughter was born a few days after you guys lost in the NC A.A. tournament. What was that experience like? Were you able to be there when she was born? If not, what was kind of the first interaction and time that you saw her?**

TAMAR BATES: To the minute we lost, I left the next day at 5:00 a.m., I got on a flight from Portland, flew to Utah and flew back home. That was the 18th. Yeah, that was March 18th, and I was already back home. She was born on the 20th.

Yeah, I was able to be there. I was going to make sure I



was there, no doubt. But yeah that was a crazy experience, being in the hospital first time I've been there, my sisters are 12 and 13. I haven't really went through that process in as much detail.

It was just great to know -- because obviously knowing I'm about to become a father but just getting closer to that moment and seeing her be born, it was great just to be there and giving her support.

**Q. Being a high major athlete and a student, who are the people, and I'm especially interested IU, coaches, players, who are the people that really are supporting you through this process, mentally or helping you manage everything that you've got going on?**

TAMAR BATES: Everybody pitches in any type of way they can. I wouldn't say there's a specific person or group of people that do more than others. Right now as of this summer, she has not been here with me. She's been home with her parents and they have been taking good care of her.

Other than that, everybody supports, uncles and all this kind of stuff. We all a family. The fact that we added her to the band, it's been really easy because everybody is in support. Everybody wants to help. So when she does -- but I do have a chance to get her up here, I know everything will be all good.

**Q. Curious about the backcourt dynamic, a year ago, a lot of new faces and guys who had never played a game for Indiana. We were asking you and X and Parker about blending in and chemistry. There are new faces now, and held over experience. How have you as a backcourt group I guess sort of navigated this off-season, whether it's mentoring young guys, working on your own games? What's different for all of you from where you were last year?**

TAMAR BATES: I would say what's different now, we are all like on the same page in terms of what Coach Woodson wants. Last year was everybody's first year of being under that staff. We were all learning and it was like a constant learning process the whole year. Now we have the basic and fundamental concepts and the things we want to do on both ends of the floor, we had and we brought back a lot of the guys who already learned and got it instilled in them, I feel like, you know, it's been easy to bring along the four freshmen in terms of teaching them what we do and how things go and how we going to play defensively, offensively.

I feel like the biggest thing, like I said was just we now all have a year under our belt together. Last year was a lot of

learning going on. So it was definitely -- it wasn't as much uncertainty coming into summer because nobody really knew what was going to happen in terms of the team and how we would play when we all got here last summer.

**Q. Congratulations on the birth of your daughter. What's her name?**

TAMAR BATES: Leilani Nicole Bates.

**Q. I have a daughter born a year ago and she just finished her freshman year in college, so it goes fast, enjoy every second of it. I promise you it goes faster than you can ever imagine. Following that, having a kid that looks up to you now, you have to set the right example, there are expectations that will come with that. You have to lead. A lot of that, you can take to the court. Are you able to find that you're able to do that; that you can combine both of those and learn from being a father and making yourself a better basketball player, teammate, leader, whatever the case may be?**

TAMAR BATES: Yeah, liked earlier, there's lessons in being a father and being a basketball player. Like there's lessons in both of them that translate to the other.

I mean, I feel like just like the basic things and especially like being a dad, I'm learning as I go. You know, she's four months old, so there's only so much that she can do. But as she continues to get older, and I'm her dad and I'm just teaching her just like simple stuff and like things that we want to live by as a family, I feel like you, you know, a lot of the leadership qualities that a father takes on in the household obviously translate to the basketball court.

I really wouldn't say -- I try not to like combine the two, because it's just two totally different things. I have two totally different mindsets with my daughter and when I'm playing basketball. I feel like the focus and learning and constant growing, those are the things that you can combine, just like the stuff that goes into it and the stuff that you learn over the years, that you can relate to.

I would just say that her being born was what -- it was the thing that I didn't know that I needed. It gave me a different kind of focus, different kind of drive, different kind of motivation. It's just -- and it came at the perfect time just after my freshman year and a lot of things went, you know, however they did, and you know, just having my baby girl born and not knowing how things was going to go as my girlfriend was pregnant and her finally getting here, it's like, obviously like it's not -- nowhere near as scary or as bad as I thought it was going to be. It's been good for me in terms of my basketball game and of course translate that to being

a father.

**Q. Wait till they start biting you.**

TAMAR BATES: I would hope not. She already teething. She chewing on everything.

**Q. I'm talking about the intentional biting, like the put-me-down biting. Don't worry, it's coming.**

TAMAR BATES: Yes, it is.

**Q. So if your game makes a big jump this year, what are two or three things that will be key reasons for that? What are the most important things or most impactful things for you to make a big jump?**

TAMAR BATES: Most impactful things. I would say being able to guard at a high level. Guarding at a high level. Making the open shots and just being a constant leader, talker and motivator, you know, just for the team. We obviously have our vets and the guys who have been here for a long time and who I'm following and taking stuff from, because nothing really beats experience.

I would say those three things. I was just talking with our GAs, and you know, we were talking about just how Andrew Wiggins, like how his career and just his role has been like put under a brighter light now because he's -- he had a big role on a winning team. He was just asking me, how can you have a roll like that to impact the winning team. I feel like, you know, just doing what I do. Like not getting outside of myself. Like I said, you know, I can be really good offensively and be good defensively. But I feel like one of my biggest -- just having energy and my competitive spirit.

I would just say being better than I was last year defensively, making open shots, creating shots, just a constant leader of the team.

**Q. Obviously we talk a lot about development. What were you trying to do stars physical development is concerned? What did you learn about last season about what a Big Ten season requires from your body and you know, did you try to gain weight, any muscle? What were you trying to do in terms of physical development?**

TAMAR BATES: I was trying to gain weight and obviously keep my body fat down, which I did. Just gain like strength. Obviously the biggest part is actually taking care of your body, doing more things. It's a long season, long practices, you're traveling all the time. We're in the weight room and training and we're conditioning, but I feel like I

did a much better job of taking care of my body, stretching, doing yoga, doing things that we say, we call it like a credit to our body.

Obviously like I know going through the Big Ten, that was really physical. You've got to be able to throw your weight around a little bit so you can compete. But that goes for all times. You can't just -- you can't just be like too light or anything because your body is going to break down this season. So that goes back to, you know, just being bigger and taking care of my body and maintaining strength and my weight.

**Q. How much weight did you gain?**

TAMAR BATES: I'm up to 200. I got here -- when I first got here, I was 178. So that's 22 pounds. But last year, I played at like 185, 183.

**Q. Curious the day-to-day, obviously the situation now, you're not with your daughter every day but when you are there, what's the day-to-day like and how -- you mentioned earlier about having a new purpose. Can you expand on that what you mean exactly by that?**

TAMAR BATES: Well, I mean, I would say my new purpose is to provide and put food on the table for her. Obviously the main thing, or what I kind of -- a statement or how I wrap my head around that is making sure her up bringing and how she's raised is better than how I was raised, and these no knock at all to my parents. They did a fantastic job. But I want to out-do them. I want to do better than them, and that's how it's supposed to be.

I would say I just want to make sure she doesn't have to worry about anything, and just give her the world and everything that she can ever dream about, but at the same time instill things in her that were instilled in me which is that you have to work for everything that you get. I just can't wait until she like get a little older and start being around the game. I feel like she'll just eventually want to pick the ball up because we're going to be in the gym all the time. I feel like that be will -- that will be special.

But I feel like just me saying that I have a new purpose, because before, I was just -- all my motivation and everything, obviously like from losing family members and just like, you know, me wanting to accomplish my dreams but now my dreams become her dreams and then the rest of my family, knowing it's not just myself time trying to do this for. I'm doing this for not only Leilani, my girl, my family, my parents. The fact that she's mine -- I already have my family but this, she's my responsibility. So I need to make sure that she's taken care of.

