

# Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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## Coach Mike Woodson

### Press Conference



MIKE WOODSON: I've always felt as a coach, every season that I've gone in as a head coach, expectations are always high, no matter what.

I think that's a good thing.

We can't run from it. It's what it is.

I think our schedule that we've scheduled this year has put us somewhat in that light in terms of competition, really stiff competition, and then you've got to deal with the Big Ten, which is stiff every year.

Expectations are always going to be high. When I came in here and took the job, expectations were high. This program is built that way, and it should be that way.

It's what it is, man. I'm not going to run from it, and I'm not going to let my players run from it. There's a lot of big things that's got to happen this year for our ballclub, and I'm going to try to coach them up and push them in that direction.

**Q. Obviously early in the off-season, Xavier Johnson was arrested and went through that process with the reckless driving. Was he punished in any way? Is he going to be punished in terms of a suspension? What type of internal -- what did he have to go through internally because of that?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, that's all behind us. He's gotten through that process. He would have to do some community service. X has grown a lot, based on the things that he's done this summer. He's put himself in a wonderful position with me being the coach that I like everything about what X is doing now, because he is doing the right things on and off the court.

He doesn't have a vehicle anymore. I took that away from him. (Laughter).

If that's punishment, it's punishment, and I don't mean that in a negative way. We're just trying to do the things that

are necessary to help us win basketball games, and I think he's made a major step in that direction to help us.

**Q. Following on with X, the way he finished last season and then maybe having to have some hard conversations with him around that incident, around that arrest, how have you pushed him this summer to be more consistent, to take his level up in terms of I think he finished last season averaging like 18 points and about six and a half assists a game. How have you basically just demanded more of him, I guess, in year two as your point guard?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, when you look at what happened to X, where we started with X and where he ended up, X probably caught more hell on this team than anybody from his head coach.

There's a reason why. I think when you're building a basketball team, you expect a lot out of all of your players, but that position is a pivotal position in terms of how you play on both ends of the floor.

X hung in there with me. He fought me at times, but it worked out well for him at the end and for our ballclub.

Watching him go through his summer work, because he did taste some success, it's the first time he had experienced being in the big dance, he really -- I mean, he just came in with a totally different attitude, which was kind of nice to see. It means to me he's growing up.

It has displayed nicely on the basketball court, because out of all the summer play that I've watched and been a part this summer, he's probably been the brightest of them all.

**Q. You were on the NBA circuit for a long time; what did you learn about yourself last year on the college circuit? It had been a while since you had done that. What did you learn and maybe some fun things you did on the circuit last year for the college games?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, the one thing that I've learned, being in the NBA all those years and coaching, there's really not enough time to prepare and teach and really be a



part of a player's life because you've got three, four games coming at you a week in the NBA. There's just not enough time in the day.

That's the frustrating part about the NBA. But it was a beautiful run for me. I'm not saying that in a negative way. The NBA was great for me. But coming back home to coach college basketball here at Indiana, I've been able to really be around the players and really be -- I'm able to coach. I'm able to prepare and teach all the basketball floor, things that I like to do.

Then when you see the results -- we had our ups and downs last year, but I thought our ups outweighed our downs. We played a lot of positive basketball. We were in a lot of basketball games. It's just going to be up to me to get them over the hump and get them to the next level because that's what it's all about.

**Q. Obviously three-point shooting is something that's been on the minds of IU fans for a long time. Do you guys need more three-point attempts to increase productivity from the line? And who are two or three players you feel are most in line to help you from three-point percentage and three-point production?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, that was a big problem last year. You guys witnessed, as the media outlet, and our fans, too, but I thought we got a lot of good looks. We were in the top -- being in the top 5 in college basketball in terms of open threes that we just didn't knock down.

I'd like to think Miller having a taste of what Indiana basketball is all about now, I think he'll be a lot better this season. Xavier showed that he could make them.

I think some of the freshmen that we're bringing in will be able to knock some of those down.

Race kind of picked it up from previous years, a guy who really wasn't allowed to shoot them. He made some for us last year.

I think we'll be okay in that regard this year. It's not like we're not working on threes. We shoot them every day. We shoot free throws every day. It's just when you get to a game situation, you've got to feel comfortable and ready to knock them down.

That's my job, to relax them and get them in that position.

**Q. You guys announced an NBA pro day here in a couple weeks. I'm curious what the genesis of that was and what you're hoping to get out of it.**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, I think when you've got high expectations and you've got a few players that might have a crack at playing at the next level, it's okay to invite the NBA world into your life. I'm not afraid of that. I don't think it put any added pressure on our players.

I think they are excited about it really, to be able to let the NBA world come in and watch practice and see who's doing what. Hell, it might enhance them to play harder and better. That's kind of how I look at it.

I'm looking forward to it. It's something that's never been done here, I don't think, and I've got to keep my ties with the NBA world anyway. I've got a lot of friends at the big level. It will be nice to have them come in and watch what we do.

**Q. I was curious kind of going off the expectations part of it, when you were a player at Indiana, I think you guys a few times were ranked in the top 10 preseason. When you were a player, did you embrace kind of the expectations, I guess, the external expectations, or were you someone who said, it doesn't matter where we are in the AP poll, I'm going to do the exact same thing? How did you approach that as a player?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, again, the rankings is a part of college basketball, all sports in college. You can't get from under that. Hell, my senior year we were ranked No. 1 in the nation. Didn't work out that well for me. I mean, we didn't win the national title.

Rankings are what they are. You've still got to play the game, my man. That's what's important, and what happened between these two lines.

It's going to be my job to get this team to play at a level every night and put them in a position to win every time they step out on the floor. That's what it's all about to me. Rankings are what they are. I don't know what we're ranked this year. Somebody told me we're ranked in the top 20. That's great. But you've still got to play the game.

That's how I approached it as a player. I think some players it's nice to see, because some of these guys hadn't been ranked since they've been here, but they are now. So let's go play the games and see what happens.

**Q. This is the first time that you guys have done media day, men and women together. Your team is preseason going to be ranked but so is Teri's. What impresses you most about Teri and her program?**

MIKE WOODSON: She's a hell of a coach. All you've got

to do is look at the results and how her team has responded to her body of work on the floor. Watching her team, her team is a beautiful team to watch because they do all the necessary things to win basketball games, and that's a sign of Teri and the work that she's put in.

I'm not surprised that they're ranked. They deserve to be ranked. Hell, they led the Big Ten sometime last year at the top. I expect that they'll be there again this year.

I'm wishing them nothing but the best.

**Q. I'm curious with Trayce, last season he talked about maybe expanding his game into the perimeter. We didn't actually see him take -- I think he took three three-pointers last season. Do you see him stepping out to the perimeter taking the three-pointer more this season, or is that something that's kind of -- I know you encouraged him to do it. Maybe he didn't feel comfortable, but do you see that as part of his game moving forward this year?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, again, I'm not going to stop him from doing that. He'll be in a position where he catches it out there and have an opportunity to shoot it. If he shoots it, fine.

You know, everybody looks at this thing where he's got to be a three-point shooter. I think if he makes a 15 to 17-foot shot, it's just as effective. That's kind of how I look at it.

He's going to be in position to shoot those shots like the little L ball and the free throw shots, and it's okay for him to shoot it.

I think this summer, the work that he's put in, he's shown that he can make that shot, and he has made them in our little pickup games and things of that nature. He's just got to carry it over to the real game when it counts.

I thought one of the biggest shots of the season was in the Big Ten Tournament against Illinois, where he faced up Kofi and he shot a jump shot. Well, he's going to have to do that some more this season. Coach is not telling him not to; put it that way.

**Q. Your second season now coming in, you've got your first one out of the way. What have you learned as a coach having all those years spent in the NBA as a coach? Plenty of experience, but the college game is a little different, and different than when you played. What are some of the things that you learned as a coach and that you learned about how to run a program after that first season?**

MIKE WOODSON: I've got to get better. I always put pressure on myself. I don't put it on the player. Yeah, the player has to play, but I've got to get better at finishing games, because I thought there were a number of games I left out there last season in terms of we controlled games -- I look at the Iowa game, coming down the stretch, four and a half minutes and we're up nine and we can't close that game out.

For me, that's tough to swallow as a coach.

So those are things that I've got to go back to the drawing board and work on to the point when I'm in that position, I get them over the hump, and we're coming out of that game feeling good about ourselves.

I don't know; coaching is coaching. There are a lot of things that come into play when you're coaching. When I look at the college game and how it's being played, a lot of pick-and-rolls, a lot of three-point shots, the teams that sit at the top really get after you defensively.

I think we've got to be able to do all those things to be able to compete at a high level and beat the big-time teams. I mean, that's what it's going to take this season because that's pretty much how the college game is being played.

**Q. Going back to Trayce, he has seemed sort of willing to talk openly about I guess being more introspective, being a leader, his legacy, things like that. As he comes back for a fourth year and I think the expectations that even he'll sort of acknowledge, does he vocalize that with you as his coach and as someone who's walked that journey before, being expected in this place to be kind of a key figure for a really good team with a lot of attention and a lot of expectations? Does he talk about that with you at all?**

MIKE WOODSON: We talk. He knows expectations are high this year. The fact that he made the commitment to come back is huge for our program. I mean, it's like the piece to the program.

I think the body of work that Trayce has put in over the three years that he's played here has been unbelievable. But he's still got a lot of work on the table. He's got a lot of things he's got to finish.

You talk about legacy, legacy is putting another Big Ten title in here. Legacy is putting another national title. That's what it's all about. I think that's what he's thinking about more than anything.

As far as his leadership, he's making strides in that area to help lead because that's what's going to be expected of

him. I'm not going to let him run from it. He's got to be our leader. He's got to push guys around him and hold guys accountable, and he's got to step up and be the guy.

I mean, that's what it's going to take for us to reach those two goals.

**Q. You've talked about legacy. You've talked about expectations. How would you define success for basketball season 22-23?**

MIKE WOODSON: Again, I don't look at it in that light. My thing is I take a season one game at a time, one practice at a time. Yes, we've got goals. I can't say this loud enough, guys: I came back here to win Big Ten titles and a national title. That's all I want.

I'm not going to push the team in any other direction. If they're scared of that challenge, then they shouldn't be here. That's kind of how I look at it.

I'm not scared of it. You shouldn't be scared of it. We've got to do this together as a unit. Again, I know expectations are high. I get that. That's a good thing. But we've got to go out and do it on the floor and show that we can win a Big Ten title and a national title. That's all I'm concerned about right now.

The only way to do that is get better each and every day in practice, and when we step on the floor that we're playing at a high level.

**Q. I saw a lot of great stuff from Jalen Hood-Schiffino at Montverde, AAU. Heard great stuff from NBA scouts about him. What do you think he is best suited to do for you guys this year, and what kind of an impact can he have as a 6'5" bigger guard who has a big arsenal?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, again, I don't put pressure on none of these freshmen. But on the flipside of that, I've got to speed the process up. They can't play like freshmen. I'm going to need those guys to be a big part of what we do.

I always have told players, you can't play everybody 30 minutes a game. It's the minutes that you get that you've got to make the most of. If it's two minutes a game, it had better be the best two minutes that you play out on the floor for us, because if you don't, I might not come back that way.

Everybody has got to be ready to play. Schiffino has been a great addition to our ballclub because he can do a lot of things on the basketball floor. But he's got to be held accountable to play at a high level and help us win

basketball games. I'm going to need him to do that.

**Q. I'm curious about your schedule this year, especially the non-conference. You guys have already got a pretty stacked gauntlet in the Big Ten, but what are you expecting out of the team going into those non-conference match-ups?**

MIKE WOODSON: To win. That's the only thing I'm expecting. As soon as we start here with Marion in the practice game, that's when it starts to me. Whenever there's officials and we throw that ball up, I expect us to win.

Yeah, we've got some stiff competition this year with Xavier and Carolina and Kansas and Arizona. Hey, it's what it is, man. Hey, we've just got to be ready to play and compete and win.

I'm not pushing anything else. We cannot run from the schedule. The schedule is what it is.

**Q. Circling back to your freshmen, you already mentioned Jalen, but how have your other freshmen been developing and working in this off-season in order to immerse themselves into a good team?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, they've had their ups and downs. They've gotten a whiff of who I'm about a little bit. But the beauty about the four freshmen that we brought in, they're very, very competitive, and that's a big part of growing as an individual player.

Because if they were non-competitive, boy, I would be very disappointed. But they are competitive. They don't like to lose.

I shared this story with you when we first started. They couldn't beat the first unit that I had out on the floor. They would go home with their heads hung and down and disappointed, and I called them in after one practice, and I said listen, there's going to come a time where you're going to beat that unit.

Well, it's been kind of back and forth ever since those first two weeks. So they've been very, very competitive. They're trying to do all the necessary things on and off the court in terms of school, which is first and foremost.

But I like how they're competing, and that's what makes coaching fun for me.

**Q. You mentioned Miller Kopp before. What's your favorite part about coaching him?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, he's very coachable. In the big league, we call him a true pro, because he listens and he tries to do all the things that's asked of him.

I think he's trying to be more of a leader. Miller has been around a while, too, and I'm going to need him to lead and hold guys accountable as well as himself.

But I like everything about Miller. I've just got to get him making some shots for us.

I thought his defense last year was phenomenal. I mean, from where he started, when people thought he couldn't really defend, he was one of our best perimeter defenders last year, which was kind of nice to see.

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