

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Race Thompson

Press Conference



Q. What led you to decide to take this last year? You had options, obviously. What do you feel you guys can accomplish this year? Give me a player's view.

RACE THOMPSON: I really wanted to come back as a team. Coach Woodson and just the steps we took the prior years to last year is just getting better and better, and I wanted to be a part of that.

I think the sky's the limit for our team this year. We've got a really deep team, really good freshmen coming in, really good returning players. Only lost a few guys, but I think we gained back a lot, so I'm real excited for this year.

Q. Race, I know kind of from the time you committed to Indiana, you talked about playing for teams that had the kinds of expectations that you face now, but this is maybe the first time they've been this high externally. What's different in your day-to-day experience? Do you do anything differently? Do you talk differently to younger guys when you know that the external expectations are so high?

RACE THOMPSON: I mean, as a team, this is all new for everybody, so I mean, obviously I've grown as a leader as I've been here. I've been here for a while. I've been taught by the people who came before me, so I'm trying just to pass my knowledge that I learned from them on down on things that worked and things that didn't work so we can build as a team and just be the best team we can be.

Q. How do you expect this front court to operate differently, especially with adding Malik into this? Jordan is kind of trying to diversify his game a little bit. How do you expect you guys to mix and match differently than you have the last couple years?

RACE THOMPSON: It's going to work. We have a great coach with Coach Woodson, all the other coaches. We're great players. We know how to play with each other. We've been playing with each other all summer. Me and Trayce know how to play with each, and then Malik has fit right in with us; Logan has gotten a little better; Jordan is

playing inside and out. We're going to mesh because we're close off the court, and I think that's one of the most important things.

If you add that relationship, then when you guys get on the court, you guys are able to work together and just play the game within each other.

Q. Race, you took 55 three-pointers last year, and it seemed to get more comfortable with it as the season goes along. Do you see yourself shooting that volume again this season? What have you done maybe to improve from a percentage standpoint over the summer?

RACE THOMPSON: I mean, it's like an everyday thing for me. I got shots up day in, day out, seven days a week. Definitely coaches want me shooting them.

Even my teammates push me to shoot them. They say I don't shoot them enough.

They definitely push me to shoot the ball so I can play inside and out and stretch the floor a little bit. I definitely see that being a part of my game. It's something that I did before I was even here. It's gotten better almost every year, so for me, it's really just a confidence thing, and I'm feeling real confident right now in it, so yeah.

Q. Race, how much different would you say Coach Woodson is going into this season versus last year? And kind of an extension of that, how much more player led is this team than maybe it was a year ago?

RACE THOMPSON: It's definitely a little more player led. He's definitely still there. He definitely has a presence.

But we had time to build a relationship over the past year than it was, so it's definitely a little different, definitely a little more comfortable knowing the coaching staff, knowing everything that's going on, knowing a couple plays, knowing what the defense is.

They really look to the older guys to show the younger guys what to do on defense, on offense, and they really



want us to be player-led team because they say player-led teams are the best teams, so they're really pushing it to be that.

Q. Is there anyone up to this point that has been, I guess, a pleasant surprise to you or has really impressed you?

RACE THOMPSON: I would say basically like all the underclassmen, starting from Tamar, Logan, all the freshmen. All of them are just -- everybody improved. When we went home and came back, everybody came back stronger, faster, better. It's really just exciting to see everybody grow and everybody want to take that next step in their game.

Q. Race, how do you want to be remembered by your coaches and teammates in your time at IU?

RACE THOMPSON: Just a great teammate and someone who would do anything to win a game. I mean, that's all I could ask for. Just a good teammate, good friend, good all that. All the good stuff. That's really it.

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