

# Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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## Mike Woodson

### Press Conference



**Q. Just to start off, what are the key things you want to see from your team in these two exhibition games?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, from a coaching standpoint, you like to see if they've picked up some stuff that we've put in from this summer. All the work that we've put in up until this point, we want to see from a defensive standpoint if they've picked things up and can carry over in a ball game as well as the offense. We want to see if they are able to execute.

There are a lot of things that we're looking for come tomorrow at 3:00 to see if these guys obtained a lot of the stuff that we've taught.

**Q. Curious how everybody is doing from a health perspective, and also how just as a coach how do you approach exhibition games? Is it your goal just to try to -- obviously it doesn't count for the record, but you're out there trying to mix and match lineups. How do you approach the rotations and distribute minutes tomorrow?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, right now we're a little banged up. Trayce is a little banged up. Tamar Bates has been sidelined for the last couple practices.

You know, we've kind of been going at each other, and it's been a long run from the summer in terms of competing against another one. So now it's time to see where we are against an opponent.

I don't know; I don't know how many minutes guys will play. I've got to get a rotation in play before we open up. I'll be using these two games to look at different combinations and just see where we are.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about Malik Reneau. What impresses you about in particular his perimeter game? Seems like you guys are comfortable with him bringing the ball up off of rebounds. How advanced is he for a kid his age in his ability to play inside and outside?**

MIKE WOODSON: He's a little ahead of the game, but he's still young. I've dealt with young players so much over the years that you've got to get young players to understand how hard they have to play. Malik is at that point right now. He plays hard in spurts, and we've got to get him consistently playing hard on both ends of the floor.

He is a talented kid in terms of being able to do a lot of things for a big guy. Yeah, we do allow him to bring it up along with Race and Trayce because I think that's the way the game is expanding. I did that in Atlanta and I did it in New York as a coach; if guys had the skill set, you put them in that position. If they rebound the ball and can make smart plays with the basketball as they're bringing it up the floor, then you allow them to do it. He's shown he can do it.

But he still has a long way to go.

**Q. We've heard a lot about how the players have really stepped up since this point last year in kind of the player-led leadership. How have you seen that progress moving into year two, and who in particular has really taken that leap over the last couple of months since the season ended to really take that next step?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, again, I think it's not just one player. I think all the older guys, X and Miller and Race and Trayce, they're kind of setting the examples of what leadership should be about. You expect that from them.

Even though Trayce and Race are the captains, X has got to have more of a voice. I'm kind of pushing him in that area as well as Miller because this is their last go-around.

I think the fact that they tasted a little success last year in making the tournament has put them in a different light, and they're trying to do all the things that's asked of them to do.

**Q. Are there one or two things that stand out for you just in what you've seen and learned in the last month or so that maybe has surprised you or has made you**



**feel better than maybe you thought you would have a month or so ago?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, I just think the fact that the young guys are competitive. The quicker they can pick up things, the better off we're going to be as a team, because I'm going to need them to play some.

I'm constantly on them about being a sponge and really trying to learn what we're trying to teach.

But I like the fact that they're competitive. At that first couple of weeks that we had gotten together as a team, the first unit kind of had their way, and it's been back and forth ever since. From a coaching standpoint, that's kind of nice to see because I don't like it to be one way. If we've got a second unit, I want that second unit to have a chance and do what's expected of them to compete and win games against the first unit, and they've done that.

**Q. At the end of last year, you said that wing defense was a real priority, getting that improved over the course of the off-season. I'm curious how you feel like that has come along during the off-season. Who's standing out in that regard? Do you anticipate doing anything different in terms of how you cover ball screens or things like that?**

MIKE WOODSON: I thought we were really good in ball screens last year. We didn't get burned a lot in ball screens.

We've got to get better in terms of how we get into the ball on ball screens and making sure that everybody is in play from a help standpoint when there's a breakdown. Ball screens are the toughest things to guard. I don't care what level you're playing at. Because the guy who's setting the screen has the advantage. He gets the advantage to knock the guy who's guarding the ball off, so now you're in a catch-up position.

The officials are not calling that, so you can't sit there and beg for help. You've got to get into the ball and be a little more physical. That's what we've been trying to stress.

Yeah, the easy way out is to switch and make sure you've got a body on a body, but I don't like doing that a lot with my 5 man. Most 5s in college are in ball screens. You can get away with it with the 4 guys, but it's not a big 4.

I think the fact that we're longer this year than we were last year, adding the freshmen, and we're a little more athletic than we were last year adding those freshmen, hopefully we can make up some ground and be rangy and long and be able to do things better from a defensive standpoint,

which we weren't that bad last year defensively.

**Q. Has there been one specific player or a few that I guess have been kind of a pleasant surprise in their development in what they've been doing or the court as we get ready for games to start?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, I think Tamar Bates has really -- he's starting to figure it out. That's kind of nice to see because he just had a lot of things going against him last season. I wouldn't call it going against him; he had a baby, and that's a major, major responsibility for an 18-, 19-year-old kid.

I think he's figured that part of it out. He's comfortable in his own skin and where he is with that. He's come back this year with a whole different attitude, which is kind of nice.

You see it in his body where he's developed his body, and he's benefitted from it. We've benefitted from it. He's playing better. He's been a nice surprise.

Then the freshmen, like I said, you never know what you get -- you draft freshmen, they come in based on how they performed in high school, but this is another level. High school and college basketball is a major jump, just like jumping from college to the pros. It's a major jump. You don't know what you've really got until you put them on the floor and you start competing.

I just like the way these freshmen, they really compete. I mean, that's been probably the most surprising, because they're competitive.

**Q. Jordan has talked to us about playing more of the 3 in practice lately. I guess from your perspective, what has been that process like, trying to expand his game a little bit more into the perimeter?**

MIKE WOODSON: I don't have a 3; I have basketball players. See, that myth of having a 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, I've just got players. My thing is when you get minutes, you make the most of it. If you guys want to call it the 4, 3, 2, whatever, I don't look at it in that regard. I put five guys on the floor to play, and hey, whatever spot you're in, you've got to make the most of. That's kind of how I look at it.

**Q. More on tomorrow, do you expect Trayce Jackson-Davis to play tomorrow, and how many players do you anticipate touching the floor?**

MIKE WOODSON: I don't know yet. I'll know that today once I get to practice and get an injury update and see how guys are doing. I'll have to face that on game decision

because I just don't know at this point.

**Q. Second year as a college head coach; I'm curious if you've approached this year differently than you did last year having a year of experience under your belt?**

MIKE WOODSON: No, I mean, I go into any season with the same attitude: To win.

The way we ended last season, it left a nasty taste in my mouth because I know our team was better, and I'm not taking anything away from St. Mary's. They were great. They played an unbelievable ballgame, and we didn't show up. I don't like that.

I know we've got to be better as we start this season and as we go into the Big Ten. We were really a shot away -- up nine with four and a half minutes to go, I've got to get them over the hump in that Iowa game. Those are the things I look at. We've got to win that ball game to go to the Big Ten Finals to try to win a Big Ten Tournament, and we didn't get it done.

At the end of the day, we've still got a lot of work to do. That's kind of how I look at it. That's my only approach when I start a season.

**Q. I guess I'm kind of curious with your own personal growth, how have you seen your own coaching style evolve in the first few practices here compared to your first few practices last year?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, again, I mean, a lot of guys didn't know who I was last year. I was new, they were new, and the fact that we've got a big part of our team back, adding in the freshmen, these guys, they kind of know who I am from an offensive standpoint and a defensive standpoint.

We've just got to go out and play the game and see how it plays out. I'm just kind of anxious to get to a game and just see where we are.

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