

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Mike Woodson

Postgame Media Conference



Indiana - 101, Bethune-Cookman - 49

Q. Coach, you guys had a ton of assists tonight. Just wanted to ask about that generally. Also, with Jalen, when he has an off shooting night tonight, what are the ways he impacts winning? I know he had eight assists on the game. What are the ways that he makes a difference even if he's not making shots?

MIKE WOODSON: Again, let's look at the total team effort. Let's not just focus in on Jalen. I mean, there's going to be nights he's going to make shots, and there's going to be nights he's not going to make shots, like he did tonight.

But the bottom line is we won the game, and it was a total team effort from everybody. I mentioned to these guys going into this game that we should average 20 to 25 assists a game. If you're unselfish and a guy is open, you've got to give him the ball.

I thought tonight we shared it, and it didn't hurt us that we made shots from the perimeter and we made our free throws. So I mean, hey, I'm not focusing in on Jalen, to be honest with you. I mean, Jalen had a solid game. He just didn't make shots. The end result was a W, and that's what counts.

Q. Sorry, I'm going to ask you to focus in on Jalen a little bit, but Jalen and X together, 14 assists, just 5 turnovers, saw a little bit more of X with the second unit tonight. Just how important are those two bridging the first unit and the second unit, playing together, and then obviously when only one of them can be on the floor, just keeping the offense fluid and moving?

MIKE WOODSON: The short period that I've been in college as a coach, I truly believe you've got to have good point guard play and perimeter play to win at a high level. I mean, just watching teams and the great teams that are from last season and just seems to win every year at a high level, they've got good perimeter players and good guards out front.

X has come into his own. I thought he proved that at the end of last season. And Jalen is still learning, but I think he's ahead of schedule in terms of how he's performed for us on the floor.

So, again, I'm still learning our team. I'm mixing and matching, and guys are responding, and that's kind of nice to see from a coaching standpoint.

Q. Mike, you bring your bench into the game, and there was a stretch where they had seven assists on seven buckets in a row. You had two freshmen on the floor for a lot of that. How has it come so quick for this particular unit to share the ball as well as they are?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, this team is competitive, man. I'm just telling you. If you'd been able to sit in practice and watch the journey from when we started 4 1/2 months ago, they just, they're competitive. They go at each other in practice, which is kind of nice, man.

In return, it's a nice carryover into the ball game. They want to all play. There's only so many minutes in the game, so they're making the most of the minutes when they're out there. The second unit, back-to-back games, man, they've been phenomenal in terms of how they've come and performed and have really built our lead for us. It's kind of nice.

Q. On the topic of that second unit, Jordan had 11 points in 12 minutes tonight. Just what does he bring to that unit?

MIKE WOODSON: He's played well. I mean, we got so many pieces, I think, and again it's what you do with the minutes that you get. That's kind of how I look at it. I've always believed that as a coach, even when I played. Coaches would play me, I tried to give them the best that I could give them based on the minutes I got.

I don't ever want to hear a player complaining, well, I need this many minutes. Well, you're on the wrong team. If I play you, give me positive minutes, and you'll play. That's just how I look at how I coach.



Q. The offense was obviously there tonight, but you come from a background of Coach Knight, where the defense is what he emphasizes. You could score 200 points, and he'd be talking about the defense. I thought your defense was really tough tonight. How do you get a team to play defense when you're up 30 and 40 points in a game?

MIKE WOODSON: Again, I've just always believed, man, if you defend and rebound, you're going to be in every game. I mean, you're going to be at every game you play, you know what I mean?

Of course shots aren't going to always fall. You're going to miss free throws, but offensively, if you don't turn it over and at least get shots and you defend and rebound the ball, you give yourself a chance to win every night you step out on the floor.

Our defense was solid last year, and it's been a nice carryover into this early season.

Q. Coach, can you talk a little bit about Miller just throughout the whole game? It kind of seems like his three-point shooting is a lot more fluid. He seems a lot more comfortable on transition. Just how nice is it to see him kind of develop over the summer and now start things off well this season?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, it's very nice because he's put in the work. He's put in a lot of time this summer shooting the basketball. When we all got together, he was making them in practice. So I'm not shocked that he's making them now in the game. He's in a good space mentally-wise, and it's kind of nice to see him knocking them down because it helps us.

Q. So what went into these last two days? Were you worried about the free throw so much Monday night and then tonight you knock in 21 of 22?

MIKE WOODSON: We've been shooting a lot of them, I know that. Nobody wants to go up and miss free throws. I think it's a mental thing, man. I mean, somebody gives you free free throws, you've got to take advantage of it.

I thought tonight, everybody, our focus and concentration level was high, and we stepped up to the line, and we made them.

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