

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Coach Mike Woodson

Postgame Media Conference



Indiana 87, Little Rock 68

Q. Talk a little bit about Xavier Johnson and the second half in terms of play making and the kind of game he and his teammates were able to play down the stretch?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, I think X, he's capable of doing that. I expect him to do that; he's our point guard. I thought he was solid when things weren't going well for him early, he just started (audio interruption).

(Audio resumed) as well as his nine points.

Q. You shot the three better in the second half, and X had three of the assists on the five you made and of course he made one of them. How important is he? You talk about shooters a lot, but how important is it for him to get shooters involved and for them to start making shots?

MIKE WOODSON: No, it's very important. Last year, guys, we were one of the top teams in the country in getting wide-open threes, and we just didn't make them. We're going to get our fair share of looks. We've just got to knock them down. X is capable of making them. Everybody on our team now I feel good about when they shoot the ball from the three-point line that it's got a chance to go in.

We'll make our fair share, but we've just got to continue to work on them and get good threes. Forced threes don't get you anything. That's when you shoot poorly.

When the ball is moving around like it did tonight, we had 18 assists, Miller was on the back end of it where in transition he was wide open for a lot of threes, and he made some tonight, which is huge for our team.

Q. What is Trayce dealing with, and with North Carolina coming to town a week from tonight, what's your confidence level he's going to be healthy, fully ready to go?

MIKE WOODSON: Man, I'm not worrying about North Carolina. We've got Jackson State coming in here on Friday. We'll continue to evaluate him. He's kind of beat up a little bit physically. Nothing major. We rested him tonight, and we'll get him ready for hopefully Jackson State. I mean, that's the next one on our schedule.

Q. When you found out Trayce was going to be out, I'm curious, did you go to anybody on the team and kind of set the expectations of higher needs from anybody?

MIKE WOODSON: No, I just said next man up. Him and Gallo was out; I said next man up. That's what this team has got to be about.

I've always been about that as a coach. I've coached games where my best players have been out of the lineup. I can't wait on those guys. I've got to still coach and get guys to perform and play at a high level. I expect guys to be ready to play.

Q. As far as the three-point shooting, you guys started out really slow tonight, 1 of 7, but then caught fire, hit 5 of 10, ended up shooting 35 percent. Are you worried as we get to the bigger games, the North Carolinas, the Arizonas, getting into a hole with that or getting down against teams of that caliber?

MIKE WOODSON: You already predicted the game. I don't look at it in that light. We've got to get to those games first and see where we are.

I mean, sure, every college coach worries about making threes when they've got shots. My thing is if we've got good shots and we're taking good shots, I feel good about them going in. You've got to make them against teams that you think we should beat, and you've got to make them against teams that are on the borderline teams, teams that match up well with us like North Carolina and some of the top teams. Yeah, I would hope we will make them. But only time will tell.

Q. The offensive efficiency around the rim, Trayce has



had some games like this this season. Race tonight only needs eight shots, makes seven of them. Basically how much do you feel if -- I don't know if bully is the word, but how much do you feel as a total front court your guys are able to be incredibly efficient around the rim?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, again, we're playing against teams that we're a little bit bigger than. It's going to be interesting to see what we match up with like teams against Xavier. They were a big team, and it was a battle.

I think we have the bodies to bang with some of the bigger teams, but only time will tell. I'm anxious to get to games like that, but right now Jackson State is staring us in the face, and we've got to get ready for those guys.

Q. Going back to that size advantage, does the rebounding discrepancy or the defensive struggles you guys had tonight, does that worry you a little bit, or is that just something you guys need to settle into?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, I don't think we had defensive struggles tonight. We won by 20 points. We gave up 60-some points. We've been averaging giving up I think 57, 58 points a game. We let this get a little bit out of hand in terms of where we like to be in terms of holding our opponents to 60 and under, but we won by 19, 20 points. I'm not too disappointed in our defense. We out-rebounded the team. We guarded the three-point line. They didn't shoot well from the three-point line or the two.

I'm pleased. I can't sit here and complain about anything tonight. It was a total team effort.

Q. I know you had a lot of nice runs in the second half, but in the first half it was pretty much touch-and-go the whole way for sort of the third straight game where you guys much better early than you did early. Is there anything you can pinpoint to the first half issues or do you consider them issues at all?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, we came in up nine after the half, but you've got to give them credit, too. They're a competitive team, and they were competing just like we were trying to compete.

I mean, you like to come in the locker room up 20. I guess that's what you want to see. But it was nine, and I was pleased with that. I thought we started the second half a little slow. They scored, I think, the first four points, and now we've got to really play and pick it up, and I thought we responded.

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