

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Race Thompson

Jalen Hill-Schifino

Postgame Media Conference



Indiana 87, Little Rock 68

Q. Race, very important for the team to kind of fight off their runs in the first and second halves. Tell me about the role that X played in that and you played in that in terms of sharing the ball.

RACE THOMPSON: Yeah, I mean, that's a good team we played against. I think me and X, we got into like a little ball screen thing. You see Trayce and X do it all the time, but you get X for Fino on a ball screen and you set a good screen, you're going to make something happen. They'll make the play for you. It was really just X playing, and he made the plays.

Q. Kind of not just about this game but through the first five games, I imagine there's been some good, some bad. Where do you feel like this team is defensively as a unit that basically led the Big Ten in the lot of those metrics last year?

RACE THOMPSON: I think we're doing good. I think when we get all our pieces together, you have Trayce protecting the rim, you see JG blocking a whole bunch of shots today, but I still think we can get better. I think we work hard at it every day in practice, and in games we'll be better. I think it just makes time.

We have four freshmen that are playing minutes, and when they play minutes, they've just got to still learn every day, every game, and I think these games are helping them learn.

Q. Race, first of all, what exactly happened? Was it elbow? What happened?

RACE THOMPSON: Honestly, I don't know. I didn't really see the replay. I think it was somebody's elbow, but I don't know. I've got just a big ol' gash right here, but I'm good.

Q. Obviously you have Jackson State, but everybody

in college basketball is talking about IU versus No. 1 Carolina a week from today. How confident are you that you guys are going to be fully healthy, really ready to go for that one?

RACE THOMPSON: Very confident. We know we have a deep team, and I think if Trayce needed to go today, he could have went. I think it was more precautionary for him.

I mean, you've seen what we can do with and without him, so I think that's why this team is special.

Q. Jalen, obviously Trayce is an important part of this team, but going out tonight you guys seemed like you didn't really miss a beat in regards to what you wanted to run and getting guys in good spots. How important was that to keep the train rolling?

JALEN HOOD-SCHIFINO: I mean, yeah, with Trayce out, that's a big part of what we've got here. I think today, obviously, as everyone has seen, Race and Xavier were great tonight, especially in the pick-and-roll actions. They made plays, and I think they stepped up as our seniors and really led us tonight.

Q. Jalen, through five games how do you feel like you're adjusting to the pace of play overall at this level, and what do you feel like going forward maybe you need to get better at?

JALEN HOOD-SCHIFINO: Yeah, it's still early. I haven't really shot the ball too well, but I'm not too worried. Like you said, it's early, so I'm just going to continue to stay in the gym and just keep working. Like Race said, I'm still young, I'm a freshman so I'm still learning on the fly every day. As the year goes on, I'll get better.

Q. Race, this is a bigger picture question, but the last two seasons of college basketball have been weird because of COVID, not normal. I guess what's the biggest thing you have learned from those two seasons in terms of just your perspective changing and being able to have a season like now where things are pretty much normal? How has your perspective changed on maybe just the little things about



basketball and life?

RACE THOMPSON: That's a deep question. I mean, like you've got to be grateful every day. During COVID, that was hard. You guys remember that, we were doing media, and it's just us sitting here with a camera in the back. I think just being grateful, just being able to be around everybody, being able to have fans. I mean, yeah, just being grateful every day because it can be taken away in a split second.

Q. For both of you, you guys had your first road trip now; you guys have had a lot of time spent together. How would you assess you guys' team chemistry through your first five games or so now?

RACE THOMPSON: Great. I would say great. I've been a part of a lot of teams here at IU, and we've had teams be cliquey; we've had all types of things. I don't think we have that at all this year.

I mean, everybody sits with everybody. Again, we're all joking around, laughing in the locker room. We have a really tight-knit group, so it's a lot of fun to be around them.

JALEN HOOD-SCHIFINO: Yeah, Race pretty much nailed it on the spot. I think we all have great chemistry off the court, and on the court I think it shows.

Q. Jalen, how important is it for you to be able to be on the court to fight through things? You mentioned your shot isn't falling; tonight it wasn't going great for the team at times, but everybody got to ride it out. How important is that for you as you're getting used to playing at the college level?

JALEN HOOD-SCHIFINO: Yeah, like just honestly, just adjusting. Like you said, I started off a little slow, not hitting shots, but I feel like my game I can kind of do everything. If my shot is not falling, I can get others involved; I can rebound the ball, defend. I'm not too worried about it. Like I said, I'm in the gym every day, so eventually those shots are going to fall, but right now it's not hurting us. Everyone is playing well. Like tonight our seniors led us, so everything worked out good.

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