

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

Friday, November 25, 2022

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Tamar Bates

Xavier Johnson

Postgame Media Conference



Indiana 90, Jackson State 51

Q. Tamar, you had a career day. Obviously some career highs and points and three-point shots and assists. And to have your daughter here for that on a day like that, day after Thanksgiving, what does all that mean to you with all this coming together right now?

TAMAR BATES: I mean, it's all the glory to God. I'm just grateful that my family can be here. This was her first two games, so I was just glad that they could be in the building and actually make the trip. I see she's excited too. She's trying to play with the microphone.

But, no, it means a lot just in my family who was here with me because last year was the first time I ever missed Thanksgiving, so the fact we were able to spend it together was special.

Q. This is for both of you, but I know that going into Mike Woodson's first season, the offseason was mostly focused on defensive stuff. Have there been any other wrinkles, any other layers of the offense that you have been able to add in this offseason that you hadn't previously?

TAMAR BATES: I would more so just say we kind of understand the offense more now because when we first put it in last year, it was kind of just us trying to figure it out like during the season.

But the fact that we went through last season and we had a whole offseason of just executing Coach's offense and what he likes for us to do, we kind of just were able to flow in everything and just execute at a higher level.

Q. Tamar, those of us who have been dads know how hard it is when the baby is young and new and an infant. How do you balance being a Division I basketball player versus all the responsibilities of being a dad, especially when they're that young?

TAMAR BATES: I mean, I've got an army behind me. My family does a great job when she's back home with them. So it really just takes a lot of stress off of me.

But it's really just like for us it was a situation that was unexpected, so we really just tried to find our sound. Kind of like a trombone player when they take it out the case and they're trying to slide it and they find that right sound. We just found that right sound, and we're just playing music now.

Q. There's the word. Xavier, we have heard from Coach Woodson and you guys through a lot of this about the summer Tamar Bates and about the kid who was stepping up and really improving his game. You've seen it all from the day he got here. I mean, what from your perspective did you see from Tamar this summer until now that is so much different from last year?

XAVIER JOHNSON: When he first came in, he would talk, but he would talk trash, but now this summer he had a different attitude. He grew up a lot. He matured.

He came in, told guys, like -- there was a video that came out -- we're going to be the hunted, so we've got to come out and still be the hunter still and be ready to play, be humble to play.

Q. Xavier, I don't know if you heard Coach Woodson here a second ago, but he said he didn't know where you were the first couple of games of the season I guess talking about maybe how you have emerged and played better these last couple of games. What maybe is different these last couple of games, and did that game a Xavier kind of get you going early in the season and you've kind of carried that on since then?

XAVIER JOHNSON: I would say I was still here if I told him (laughing). But I was just trying to feel out my teammates.

First couple of games we didn't have Trayce. I think the second game he came back. I was playing with Fino a lot,



and it's different playing with two point guards on the floor. I had to figure out myself and figure out my role.

That is the type of player I am. I'm a pretty good teammate when it comes to team chemistry. So I just had to feel out my teammates. And other than that, I'm going out there and just keep it going and stay locked in with my teammates and keep my teammates rolling too.

Q. Tamar, I recognize you guys want to be able to kind of play in whatever combination Coach puts you on the floor, but that bench in particular, this isn't the first time this season we've seen you guys kind of come in and just really kind of launch kind of on the scoreboard, just put a 10-0 run. Today I think it was an 18-4 run pretty fast into Jackson State. What is it about that group that you guys just play so well together?

TAMAR BATES: We kind of just understand that we're just as important as the first five or whoever is on the floor, but we just come in with the mentality of executing whatever the game calls for. We weren't getting too many stops, so we knew we needed to heat up the defensive end so we could turn that into offense.

We really just understand that the whole team is as strong as the bench, so us being on the scout and guys having to really worry about who comes in down to the ninth man, we just know that that just makes us even scarier.

Q. Xavier, ahead of North Carolina on Wednesday what kind of adjustments and final tune-ups do you want to see from your team before that game?

XAVIER JOHNSON: I mean, we've got two -- they have a big dinosaur coming down in Armando. We have two or three big dinosaurs as well that are ready to compete at a high level, and I think they're ready to play.

You know, you have a couple of guys banged up, but as Coach says, we have to be ready to play. We have to get our treatment for the next couple of days that we have off. We have to take care of our bodies and be mentally sharp, and I think that we're ready to play, honestly.

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