

# Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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## Mike Woodson

### Press Conference



MIKE WOODSON: Let's do it.

**Q. How have you seen Trayce progress the last couple days? Maybe he wasn't 100% the other night, but how has he responded to treatment?**

MIKE WOODSON: He practiced yesterday, so I haven't been down on the floor today or even talked to the trainer today. I'll give him a call here in a minute just to evaluate him and see where he is for practice today.

So I won't know that till a little later on.

**Q. What is Trayce dealing with? Is it primarily the thumb or is there something else? How have you seen guys around him, Race, Malik, realize if he's a little bit hampered, we got to step up our game?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, again, you go through bumps and bruises when you play this game. I don't know if he took a fall or what, but I noticed it a few games right before the Little Rock game, him over there sitting uncomfortably. I don't know if it was his tailbone or something that was going on.

At the end of the day if he can't play, it's next man up. So I thought Race did a hell of a job for us in the Little Rock game when he didn't play. He stepped up, played unbelievable.

That's the kind of team I've always wanted to have. I've had that in the past in Atlanta and New York when I coached there.

Injuries occur. Everybody won't probably make it through a season. You hope they would, but that's not always the case. It's got to be the next guy in line to be ready to play. You know what I mean?

That's just how I look at it. When guys get hurt, there's not a whole lot you can do on it. You can't wait on them. You have to push guys that are ready, get them ready to go.

**Q. How important is transition defense in this game? What are the keys for you guys to slow down North Carolina when they get the ball?**

MIKE WOODSON: Transition defense is important in every game that we play. All these teams that you play, everybody's trying to push. They got fast guards. They get the ball up the floor. So we got to get back and build our wall and make them go through our halfcourt defense.

We can't have them running all over the gym and expect to win.

**Q. Tomorrow's game marks the end of the Big Ten ACC Challenge. What are your thoughts on the end of that? What are your general thoughts on these conference challenges? Would you like to see it replaced with another one?**

MIKE WOODSON: Again, I'm new at this, man. Last year was my first experience. I haven't had a whole lot of time in dealing with this particular game with the ACC.

I think it's great. I don't have a problem with it. My thing is I'm always looking for competition. We got enough of it this season to see where our team is. I don't have anything against it. It's what it is. I don't have any control over it obviously.

If I got to play an ACC team, I'm good with that. I don't have a problem with it because there's talent over there. North Carolina has a lot of talent. It's all good.

**Q. What have you seen from Pete so far this season? Watching North Carolina, has he taken any progressions from what you saw against Northwestern last year?**

MIKE WOODSON: Say that again, who?

**Q. Pete Nance on North Carolina. Have you seen him take any progressions from last year at Northwestern?**

MIKE WOODSON: Not really. I mean, he had a big game about three games ago, two, three games ago, where he



had 28. The guy's capable of putting the ball in the hole.

I've known that kid when he was a young kid. I coached his daddy, Larry Nance. I like everything about him. He plays hard. He rebounds the ball. He can put the ball in the hole.

That position, we got to keep our antennas up and stay alert because he's capable of putting the ball in the hole.

**Q. North Carolina lost a couple games the past couple days. Do you see it as an advantage? Do you like playing a team that's on a slide like this, see areas where you can take advantage?**

MIKE WOODSON: I never go in a game thinking I've got an advantage. I've never coached that way. I've never played that way.

The beauty about their team is they're battle-tested. They were in the championship game last season. They know what it's like to have their backs against the wall.

I mean, I'm not taking this team lightly. They got a great team. They're well-coached. We going to have to come out and commit ourselves for 40 minutes to beat them. It's not going to be a game where they just roll over and let us win. We're going to have to go out and earn it, play for 40 minutes to win the game I think.

**Q. Obviously Armando Bacot, Caleb Love, some of UNC's biggest offensive weapons, Black is an elite defender, do you see anyone on North Carolina that has gone under the radar so far this season that you will still have to look out for tomorrow?**

MIKE WOODSON: Not really. They been playing eight guys. Trimble, the young freshman, I like him a lot. He's a guy that we looked at early on, on the recruiting trail.

Their five to six guys that play the bulk of the minutes, they're legit. They can play. Their guard play in Love and RJ, having the big fella inside, they pose a threat. You got Nance and Black who can defend, and Nance can make shots.

It's a solid ballclub, man. I'm telling our guys they can't take them lightly. This is a big-time team, a big-time game. We got to see what we made of.

**Q. It looked like against Xavier, you switched less than you usually do. When it comes to playing these bigger teams, how do you balance wanting to switch the ball screens but not wanting to give up mismatches?**

MIKE WOODSON: Again, I've always coached that way. When we think there's an advantage for us defensively, then we will switch. But if there's a disadvantage, I'm not going to put X on a center or a power forward. Doesn't make sense to do that.

I mean, we'll switch, do what we normally do from a defensive standpoint. Again, I go into a game protecting certain players and not trying to put them in a bad position. You know what I mean? That's what it boils down to when you're trying to build your defense.

**Q. You started recruiting Xavier Johnson shortly after you got the job at IU. Was there someone that tipped you off about him originally? How did you find out about him? What about the early conversations with him or watching film made you feel like you wanted him?**

MIKE WOODSON: Again, I was so new, it was my coaching staff. Kenya Hunter played a major role in getting Xavier here. He knew the kid. He had recruited him before. We knew he was out there. I started watching tape on him. I liked his speed.

But there were a lot of things that we had to teach Xavier, I mean, in terms of running pick-and-rolls, just running a basketball team. You guys remember when he started with us, I mean, he struggled early on in terms of being able to run our team, do the things that I wanted.

He's come a long way. I love everything about him. I guess he's heard me in his ear enough. But he's improved tremendously for our ballclub. We've all benefited from it.

But Kenya had a lot to do with it. He knew the kid, knew his family. Once I got involved, started doing my due diligence on it, it all worked out in terms of getting him here.

**Q. With Trey Galloway, you mentioned last night you were still going to evaluate him. What do you need to see from him to make sure you feel good about him going tomorrow?**

MIKE WOODSON: He practiced yesterday. I mean, he looked pretty good. But, again, I haven't talked to the trainer this morning to see how he actually feels. These guys are still in class right now.

We have a late practice, so I'll know a little bit later on. If he feels pretty good, we'll suit him up tomorrow and play him.

**Q. Your relationship with Hubert Davis, did you know**



**him when he played in the NBA? Overall, what do you think about the job that he's done so far at North Carolina?**

MIKE WOODSON: He's done an excellent job. I don't question coaches ever. I never do that.

I knew of him as a player. I watched him play in the NBA, but I didn't know Hubert Davis. I think he's done an excellent job. Any time you can get your team to the final game, I say you done just fine.

I got nothing but respect for Hubert Davis and his staff.

**Q. I recognize this is sort of a bigger-picture question, but something like the ACC Big Ten Challenge moving off the schedule, if that's not something the conference puts back on in some form, would you want to seek another one of these marquee games in the late November, early December calendar?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, we hoping that we get Kentucky, which I think is going to possibly happen here in the future. Doesn't get much bigger than that either. You have Kentucky. We have Kansas next year here at home.

But we'll figure it out as we go along. I'll try to make our schedule competitive as I can. I mean, you look at our schedule this year, it's competitive. If we can keep doing that, it would be great for our program I think. You know what I mean?

Again, I don't know how this ACC thing is going to turn out. I mean, I have no control over that, if they'll bring it back. I don't know if it's going to go away. I don't know. We'll figure it out as we go along.

We'll find another team that's a big-time team and see if we can put a game together. That's all we can do at this point.

**Q. I know you talk a lot about still learning about this team. You've had this six games to start, now this fun, competitive stretch coming up. Through six games, have you learned all you need to know about this team?**

MIKE WOODSON: Only time will tell, man. I mean, I like what we've done in the six games. Again, we heading into our seventh game. You try to learn, do the best you can, but you always learn something about your team.

I thought against Xavier, which was a big team that matched up big with us, we answered the bell. So Wednesday night is going to be another challenge for us just to see where we are as a ballclub. But only time will

tell.

Thank you.

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