

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

Sunday, January 8, 2023

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Coach Mike Woodson

Postgame Media Conference



Northwestern 84, Indiana 83

Q. Is there anything on which you can pinpoint the defensive problems?

MIKE WOODSON: Xavier Johnson and Race Thompson are sitting on the sideline, and X has been out a while now, who anchors in guarding the ball coming up the floor and does a lot of pretty good things defensively for us. That's why we're struggling a little bit defensively. We've got two starters that are sitting on the sideline, and I'm reaching trying to figure out who's going to replace that.

Q. Earlier in the year you guys win at Xavier, a good team, you beat North Carolina here, now back to back, lose a 21-point lead to Iowa, lose to Northwestern. Where do you think things are at, and what issues do you see that are fixable?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, you've got to keep practicing, and we've got to keep working. Nobody is going to feel sorry for the Indiana Hoosiers, and yes, we've got to key guys that are sitting on the bench not in uniform, but we've got other guys that are in uniform that's got to step up and play.

I thought tonight getting down early, we struggled early on. Now, maybe I have to tinker with the lineup again. I thought starting Geronimo, I thought he would give us a lift being a junior and the fact that he's done it. By no means am I blaming it on Geronimo, but we got off to such a slow start, 17 down to a good team like that -- they're playing well. I'm not taking anything away from them. They played a hell of a game.

We got down early, and it was a dogfight trying to get back, and we could never get back.

Q. This is sort of procedural, but number one, did you guys tinker with a little zone there in the second half? And do you think maybe because you're shorthanded some guys that are so good for you on the ball, sort of fiddling with the defense, trying some different looks

that way?

MIKE WOODSON: We played a lot of zone, more zone than I've ever played as a coach. We picked up and we pressed in the 2-2-1 back to a 2-3. So yeah, I am trying to change it up a little bit. But still, no excuse. We gave up 80 points tonight, and you're not going to beat very many teams in the Big Ten giving up 80.

Q. To that end, 16 turnovers led to 25 points for Northwestern. A lot of turnovers were by some of the younger players. What's the message you give to them, and is this something they just have to fight through a little bit?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, again, when you're dealing with young players, things like that happen.

As well as Jalen played today, he had six turnovers. The turnovers that we had led to 25, 26 points, and that's tough to overcome.

We've got to be better in that area, and we have been. We've been averaging right at 12 a game, and 16 doesn't seem like a whole lot, but it's how you turn it over that leads to points and that puts you behind.

Q. Talking about the points off turnovers, the slow start kind of got you today, but defensively what can you change -- this time it was the points off turnovers, but what can you do defensively when you see that that's coming to try to alter that and slow that down so it doesn't create such a hole?

MIKE WOODSON: It ain't rocket science; you've got to work harder. You've got to work harder. I think they've outworked us the last two games, even though you just said it, we got off to a great start at Iowa, I think, and we didn't sustain it because the second half they outworked us.

I mean, it's something that we've got to continue to work. It's not going to -- nobody is just going to hand-deliver you wins. We've got to go earn a win. We've got to go to Penn State now and see what we're made of.

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

Q. When you say "work harder," are you specifically talking just about defense or rebounding or --

MIKE WOODSON: Play harder, everything. Both sides of the ball. It's my job to get them to play harder. That might cure a lot of problems when you're struggling.

Q. Obviously Trayce played the whole game today, and he's been battling through the back troubles he's had. First off, just what effort were you getting from him today, and how much of a balance do you have to strike between wanting to make sure he's healthy down the road but wanting to keep your best player on the floor?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, the guy had 18 and 24 points -- I mean, 24 rebounds and 18 points. I'd say he played a solid game.

When you're 17 down and you're searching, you surely don't want your best player sitting over there next to you. I thought he played his butt off, gave us all he could give us, but we fell short.

Q. This is the second straight game you guys have fouled a lot, given a lot of free throws. I know some of that at the end was intentionally fouling to get back in the game, but what do you think has been the reason for the fouling and sending other teams to the line as much as you have?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, again, when you're down and you have to press, 10 of those fouls came at the very end, 10 points. So if you hadn't been in the game, you maybe hadn't had to foul, and the fouls would have been pretty evenly.

I thought we shot a few fouls ourselves. I don't know what we ended up shooting. We were 10 for 14, they were 19 for 28, but all of those came because we had to press and get back in the game to slow the clock down.

I mean, we haven't been fouling a whole lot. We've just got to make our free throws. We were a little bit better that area tonight. It cost us, I thought, at the Iowa game.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports