

# Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

Sunday, March 5, 2023

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

## Mike Woodson

### Postgame Media Conference



Indiana 75, Michigan 73 (overtime)

**Q. Indiana 75, Michigan 73.**

**Q. After Tuesday night and Michigan puts that run, what does it say about this group the way they dug in and pulled together the last ten, 12 minutes?**

MIKE WOODSON: They have got a lot of fight in them. You know, I didn't know how would respond after the Iowa game and I thought we came out and defensively, we were as good as we've been all year and then right before the half, they made I think a 10-0 run that cut our lead to two, and you know, kind of knocked us for a loop a little bit.

And we came back the second half and they were clicking on all cylinders, man. We just kept grinding. I was shuffling guys. You know, we were in foul trouble with Gallo and eventually foul out.

But I thought everybody that played kept making plays, and I thought the two plays that race made down the stretch from a defensive standpoint, the two steals, were the two biggest plays of the game.

**Q. At one point, six straight Michigan possessions without a field goal; when you were down ten, what do you feel like in that stretch got the guys back on track?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, again, it's been our defense all year, man. When we are clicking defensively and getting stops, and then if we are making shots because if we started to make some shots throughout that run, I mean, we were a pretty good team when we were doing that. We were getting stops. After the stops; that we had no choice. They were playing extremely well. You know, once we took the lead, then it was back and forth.

I thought the steal that Race had and the layup that he missed that, really could have iced it for us, I thought. But took us overtime to go get it.

**Q. I wanted to yet your thoughts on Trayce's**

**performance on Senior Night: 27 points, nine rebounds, leads you in assists, two big blocks in overtime. What did you think about the way he played considering it's Senior Night and everything?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, there was a lot at stake, you know what I mean. It's the last game at home. You know, playing for the double-bye, something that we didn't do last year. Hell, we had to play our way into tournament play last year.

So I mean, it kind of eases the mind a little bit, but they still had to step and make plays to help us win this game because Michigan was playing for something as well.

I can't say enough about Trayce Jackson-Davis. He's had a stellar, stellar career here at Indiana, but he's still got a lot of basketball left.

**Q. About 14 minutes left, you take Trayce and Miller off the floor; it was Race, three true freshman and Tamar. They weathered the storm to keep Indiana in the game. What did see from that rotation on the floor?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, Miller and Race were struggling when I took them out of the game, so I was searching, too, as a coach. I thought Tamar came in and Kaleb came in and Malik, they gave us some positive minutes in that down the stretch.

But coming down the stretch, make no mistake about it, I was going about with my seniors, and that's what I made the push to put in Race and Miller to bring it back home.

**Q. Different era these days, but Miller and Race and Trayce all had choices to make last year in regards to coming back. You got a six-year guy and a fifth-year guy and a fourth-year guy. How much does it mean to you that that commitment that they have made is now kind of played out itself a little bit?**

MIKE WOODSON: Means a lot. You know, because again, this being my first go around and coming into a situation where everybody was in a disarray, was talking



about leaving. Hell, I didn't know what we were going to do to be honest with you, until they started to make the decision to come back, and us getting Miller.

You know, it's been a good run for all three of those guys because they have experienced something that they had not experienced in college basketball, and that was last year playing in tournament play in the NCAA. Miller had never been there, and neither Race or Trayce had been there.

They have done a lot in short period of time. But we still got a long way to go.

**Q. As the game was ticking down last few minutes, I just seem to wonder about when you played, and I just wonder if any game came up that you were thinking, man, we got to have the fans, we got to have the will to win, and just your thoughts as it went down to the end and went into overtime?**

MIKE WOODSON: Hey, it was my last game here on this floor, you know, playing for the Big Ten title. Everything was at stake, man. To win the Big Ten title in overtime on your own floor in front of you are why own fan base, man, that was the biggest -- one of the biggest thrills of my life playing here, and it was on Senior Night, so it made it even better.

Those are the things I was thinking. I wanted these guys to win in the worst way, man, because it's a good feeling to be home, back here in your last game on Senior Night in front of your fan base and winning basketball games, and they were able to pull it out, so I'm so proud of them.

**Q. You mentioned last year having to play into the tournament. This year, you don't have those worries. Not only that, you most likely secured the No. 2 seed in the Big Ten Tournament which means you have a double-bye. How important is it having that double bye for this team moving forward?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, it's very important. I think back to last season when you have to play, we played three straight games three straight nights. Man, that's tough, physically, as well as mentally.

And you know, our guys were right there at the end fighting, man. You know, they were playing for something and because they had never tasted the NCAA play, and this year, it will be a little different.

But Friday, Saturday and Sunday, there's still a lot of basketball, there really is. We have to take it one game at a time, one day at a time and see where it leaves us. But

I'm happy that we are playing three games versus four.

**Q. Tamar has been on a little bit of a roller coaster here over the last month or so, and he had struggled a little bit earlier in this game and you had to go to him with Trey in foul trouble, and seemed like he stepped up.**

MIKE WOODSON: He did. They came in, said, "Who are you going with?" Well, I've got to go with the next senior guy. I can't rely on freshmen to bail us out. You know, Tamar has had some big games for us, especially here in this building.

So I elected to go with him, and he bought it on. He played well down the stretch, made a big shot. So I couldn't be more proud of the kid. He stepped up and did what he needed to do to help us win.

**Q. I wanted to ask with Tamar, too. His defense in particular, he spent a lot of time on Bufkin in the last ten, 12 minutes and seemed like he took Bufkin out of the game, out of his rhythm. What did he do well?**

MIKE WOODSON: He earned his stripes tonight. That kid has been place pretty good and been playing extremely well, and I thought Tamar did a tremendous job in terms of trying to keep him in front and making him make tough shots, and we are going to need that the rest of the way. I mean, everybody has got to be on board and committed, and see what happens.

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