

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

Thursday, March 9, 2023

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Mike Woodson

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Three games, three days to win this thing. How do you feel the last couple days have been and how do you feel going ahead?

MIKE WOODSON: I always feel good about going into a ballgame. This time last season we were a desperate team trying to figure out the tournament once we got in. I thought we played well last year to get almost to the finals, but almost wasn't good enough. It got us in tournament play, which hadn't been done in some time.

It's different this season. We played well enough to put ourselves in position this Big Ten season. Getting the double bye gives you a day or so to prepare, two days to prepare. Don't know who we're going to play yet. Only time will tell.

We're going to try to take it just one game at a time and see where it leads us.

Q. You've had between Tuesday, Sunday of the final week of the regular season, now Sunday to Friday. A little bit more gap between games. Has that allowed you to freshen guys' legs?

MIKE WOODSON: We haven't done a whole lot. I mean, a couple of those days, the days after the Iowa game, we had to get back to work because there was a lot of slippage on both ends of the floor.

Coming to Chicago, we had a pretty intense practice a few days ago. Today was kind of a skull session day where we went over a lot of things that we needed to go over, but nothing that young guys shouldn't be able to do.

Let's just hope it's a nice carryover when we tip it off tomorrow night.

Q. Jalen Hood-Schifino was named finalist for national freshman of the year. What has made him an elite player looking at what he brought when he came to the

table, what you guys have done with him?

MIKE WOODSON: Again, he's improved, no doubt about that. From the time I saw him in high school, he's made a major jump.

I think the fact that we lost Xavier early on put him in a tough position. I mean, we didn't bring him in here to log all the minutes at point guard. But the fact that he's been put in that position, he's done a tremendous job in terms of helping us get to that point. But he's still got a long way to go.

Q. You mentioned big jumps. In what areas do you feel he's made the biggest jumps?

MIKE WOODSON: Again, being able to compete at this level, the college level. High school is totally different. It's another jump. If you go to the NBA, it's a bigger jump.

But he's made a major jump in being able to run my stuff in terms of offensive stuff, still be able to score the ball and do the things that he's capable of doing.

From the defensive side, I mean, he's done a lot of good things on both sides of the ball to help us win games. That's important.

Q. I know the big picture is the NCAA tournament. Indiana has never won the Big Ten tournament. The opportunity to do something that Indiana has not done before...

MIKE WOODSON: Well, we've done some things here in the last little over year and a half that I've been here that we haven't done in a long time. So you got to give credit to a lot of these players and my coaching staff for making that happen.

Listen, I'm not worrying about the NCAA. Right now the Big Ten tournament is staring us in the face. I thought last year we made a nice run at it, but we fell short. Now this is a new season, a new opportunity to go out and try to win the Big Ten tournament. Then we'll worry about NCAA tournament.

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Big Ten tournament is staring us in the face. We got a great opportunity, just like the teams that are still in it, the teams that are waiting to play just like us.

Q. You've said a few times this season going through your second year learning some things based on what happened last year. Is there anything in the routine and preparation that you repeat from last year because you had some success? What have you learned year to year getting the team ready for the Big Ten tournament?

MIKE WOODSON: I haven't changed a lot, guys, from day one. My preparation has always been the same. It's just getting guys to buy into what you're doing and doing it consistently over a 40-minute ballgame. I haven't changed.

I just thought last year being down 17 at halftime to Michigan, something needed to be said and done. It wasn't pretty for Big Fella at halftime, but boy did he respond, God dog. He responded that game, the Illinois game, the Iowa game. It's been a nice carryover into this season because he's had a hell of a season.

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